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OF

THE MANNER

IN WHICH

THE PERSECUTORS DIED.

A TREATISE.

BY

L. C. F. LACTANTIUS.

EDINBURGH:

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TO

The Right Reverend

BEILBY PORTEUS, D. D.

Bishop of Chester,

THIS TRANSLATION

OF *LACTANTIUS*

DE MORTIBUS PERSECUTORUM

IS INSCRIBED

BY

THE EDITOR.

PREFACE.

IT is a queſtion much agitated among learned men, Whether the treatiſe de Mortibus Perſecutorum *ought to be aſcribed to L. C. F. Lactantius, the author of the* Divine Inſtitutes? *Le Nourry* [Diſſert. in L. Cecilii Lib. d. M. P.] *has collected various arguments for proving that it ought not; and other writers have furniſhed ſome additional arguments on the ſame ſide of the queſtion.*

My purpoſe is, to make a fair ſtate of thoſe arguments, to ſuggeſt what may be ſaid in anſwer to them, and to produce the arguments which are generally employed in ſupport of the propoſition, That the treatiſe de Mortibus Perſecutorum *ought to be aſcribed to Lactantius.*

1. " *The only MS. hitherto discovered of* " *the treatise* d. M. P. *bears this title, in red* " *letters*, Lycii Cecilii, *&c. not* Lucii Cœlii " Firmiani Lactantii, *&c. The chief atten-* " *tion of copists was bestowed on the titles of* " *their MSS. and therefore, had this title* " *been erroneous, the copist, on revising his* " *transcript, would have corrected it.*" Le Nourry, p. 130.

Answ. *Le Nourry admits, and indeed how could he have denied it, that this copist was utterly ignorant of the Latin language, and that he was exceedingly careless; so it is vain to talk of* his *attention and care. The first word of this title*, written in red letters with so much attention, and so carefully corrected, *is* Lycii, *a word obviously erroneous: hence it appears, that the copist omitted to do what Le Nourry pronounces that he must have done.*

The difference in writing between Cœlii *and* Cecilii *is too inconsiderable to merit observation;*

tion; and Baluzius remarks, that Lactantius, in ſome MSS. of his works, is ſtyled L. Cœcilius, *and not* L. Cœlius. *Thus alſo Bernardinus de Buſtis, in the 15th century, quotes Lactantius under the name of* Lucius Cœcilius Firmianus. *See* Menagiana, *t.* iv. *p.* 85.

2. " *The treatiſe* d. M. P. *would have* " *borne the name of* Firmianus Lactantius, " *had it been written by the author of* the " Divine Inſtitutes." *p.* 132.

Anſw. *This obſervation ſuppoſes, that in all MSS. the name of the author* muſt *be prefixed at full length. A propoſition, which maintains the infallibility of title-pages, may ſeem too extravagant for confutation; but, in fact, ſeveral MSS. of Lactantius omit that name by which he is generally known.*

Beſides, it appears that the copiſt had not left ſpace ſufficient for inſerting the name of the author at full length in the illuminated title. This will be obvious to every one who inſpects the fac ſimile *of the MS. as publiſhed*

by Le Nourry himself; *and therefore no argument can be drawn from the omission of words which could not have been inserted.*

3. " *The style of the treatise* d. M. P. *is* " *brief and obscure*; *whereas the style of Lac-* " *tantius is copious and clear*; *and therefore* " *that treatise cannot be a work of his.*" *p.* 134.

Answ. *The subject of that treatise is different from the subjects of the other works of Lactantius, and therefore it is not strange that the style also should be different. The style of the Epistles of Cicero is different from the style of his Orations*; *and yet there is no critic, who, on that account, questions the authenticity either of the Epistles or of the Orations: and as to the obscurities in the treatise* d. M. P. *they ought to be imputed to the gross ignorance of the transcriber; for whenever the real words of the author can be discovered, he appears a perspicuous, although concise, historian.*

4. " *There*

4. " *There are ſome expreſſions in the trea-*
" *tiſe* d. M. P. *which no claſſical writer* [bo-
" næ Latinitatis auctor] *would have uſed;*
" *and therefore it cannot be ſuppoſed that*
" *Lactantius uſed them. For example, in*
" *c.* 2. *it is ſaid, that the diſciples of Chriſt*
" eccleſiæ fundamenta miſerunt; *and in*
" *c.* 5. *that the King of Perſia, while inſult-*
" *ing over Valerian, mounted his horſe,* im-
" poſito pede ſuper [*or* ſupra] dorſum e-
" jus." *p.* 135. 136.

Anſw. *If Le Nourry means, that no expreſſion could have been uſed by a claſſical writer which does not occur in ſome one of the few claſſical writers whoſe works are ſtill extant, he muſt alſo maintain, that, at this moment, we are acquainted with all the claſſical expreſſions of which the Latin language was capable. Beſides, many phraſes,* ſuppoſed *to be* not claſſical, *occur in the undoubted works of Lactantius.*

With regard to the particular phraſes at which

which Le Nourry, no eminent philologiſt, takes exception, that *of* " *eccleſiæ* fundamenta mi-" ſerunt," *might be juſtified; for, in Latin, the ſignifications of the verb* mitto *are wonderfully various; and Æl. Spartianus, a contemporary of Lactantius, ſays,* " *poſt mu-*" *rum* miſſum *in Britannia.*" Vita Severi, *Hiſt. Aug. Script. p.* 73. *This example is ſufficient to obviate the criticiſm of Le Nourry. But it is more probable, that, inſtead of* " mi-" ſerunt," *we ſhould read* " immiſerunt," *which is unexceptionable, or* " poſuerunt," *as in Lactantius,* Inſtit. iv. 20. *or* " de-" miſerunt," *as in Q. Curtius,* v. 4. " *tri-*" *ginta pedes in terram* fundamenta demiſſa " *ſunt.*"

Neither is there, in the conſtruction of the Latin language, any thing inconſiſtent with the phraſe " *imponere pedem* ſupra dorſum e-" jus." " *Injicere* quempiam ſupra ſtercus," *means, in Ciceronian Latin,* " *to throw one* " *upon a dunghill*;" *although, if Cicero's treatiſe*

tiſe de Divinatione *had been loſt, and that phraſe had occurred in the treatiſe* d. M. P. *Le Nourry might have pronounced it unclaſſical. But J. L. Bunemannus* ad Lactant. *has produced an example in point from Q. Curtius,* ix. 7. " pedem ſuper cervicem *jacentis* " impoſuit."

5. " *The writer* d. M. P. *ſpeaking of the* " *perſecution under the reign of Domitian,* " *avoids every mention of the name of that* " *Emperor. Lactantius would not have ex-* " *preſſed himſelf ſo indiſtinctly.*" *p.* 135.

Anſw. *Domitian is ſufficiently* deſcribed, *and no judicious rhetorician could have* named *him in a ſentence which concludes thus :* " *Me-* " *moria* nominis *ejus deleta eſt.*" *It might be added, that Lactantius,* Inſt. i 1. *mentions the ſufferings of the Chriſtians without naming their perſecutors.* " *Qui adhuc adverſus ju-* " *ſtos in aliis terrarum partibus ſæviunt.*"

6. " *The dialogue between Diocletian and* " *Galerius, c.* 18. *is exceedingly obſcure, and* " *it*

" *it in no ſort reſembles the ſtyle of Lactan-*
" *tius. The ſpeakers ought to have been*
" *marked thus :* Galerius *ſaid,* Diocletian
" *anſwered,* Galerius *replied,*" &c. *p.* 139.

Anſw. *Here the appeal is to taſte, and every reader of taſte, who has examined the treatiſe* d. M. P. *will judge for himſelf. Le Nourry thinks that the Dialogue is exceedingly obſcure; others may poſſibly think that, take it for all in all, it is in clear language, and that if it had been embarraſſed with* " *he*
" ſaid, *and he* anſwered, *and he* replied," *the nauſeous repetition would have detracted much from the elegance of the work, without adding any thing to its authority.*

7. " *The treatiſe* d. M. P. *was written*
" *about the year* 313 *of the vulgar æra, and*
" *other treatiſes, acknowledged to have been*
" *written by Lactantius, are of a later date.*
" *Lactantius is wont to quote his own works,*
" *but he never quotes the treatiſe* d. M. P.
" *and therefore it is not his.*" *p.* 146.

Anſw.

Anſw. *It does not appear on what occaſion Lactantius could have quoted the treatiſe* d. M. P. *with propriety. It could not have been in the fifth book of the Inſtitutes, where he treats of the ſame ſubject; for* that *would have introduced unneceſſary references or repetitions.*

Le Nourry ſeems not to have been aware of another and more material circumſtance. If St Jerom may be credited, a treatiſe de Perſecutione *was written by Lactantius: now* that *treatiſe is never alluded to in his works, any more than the treatiſe* d. M. P. *Are we then to ſuppoſe, notwithſtanding the authority of St Jerom, that Lactantius wrote no treatiſe* de Perſecutione ?

The queſtion is embarraſſing; but an hypotheſis-maker may get rid of it thus: " *The* " *treatiſe* de Perſecutione *was, no doubt, the* " *very laſt work of Lactantius, and therefore* " *no references to it could have been made in* " *his earlier works; but had it exiſted, we*

" *ſhould have ſeen thoſe earlier works repeat-*
" *edly quoted in it.*"

8. " *This treatiſe cannot be of Lactantius*;
" *for there are ſeveral circumſtances in it in-*
" *conſiſtent with what contemporary writers*
" *have related.*" *p.* 147.

Anſw. *This is ſerious indeed! it overthrows all hiſtorical evidence, and lets in univerſal ſcepticiſm. Why might not Lactantius have contradicted contemporary writers? becauſe* he *was infallible, or becauſe* they *were? But* who *are the contemporary writers whom the author* d. M. P. *contradicts? A panegyriſt or two, not ſo credible as himſelf*; *for* he *muſt be a wretched hiſtorian indeed whoſe evidence does not outweigh the evidence of twenty panegyriſts.*

Perhaps Le Nourry meant, that the author d. M. P. *does not always agree with Euſebius. But the diſcrepancies between thoſe two writers are neither many nor important*; *and it is probable that, in ſome things, the author*

d.

d. M. P. *was worſe informed than Euſebius, and in others better. At leaſt Le Nourry has not ſhewn that the teſtimony of Euſebius, when placed againſt that of the author* d. M. P. *muſt always preponderate.*

9. " *There are improbable circumſtances in* " *the treatiſe* d. M. P. *and therefore Lactan-* " *tius was not the author of that work.*" *p.* 147.

Anſw. *This leads into a wide field.—If any circumſtances appear improbable to any critic, the work that contains ſuch circumſtances muſt not be aſcribed to Lactantius!*

Hereafter there will be an opportunity of examining moſt of thoſe incredibilities: one of them, by way of ſpecimen, ſhall be examined at preſent.

Le Nourry ſays, that Lactantius would not have affirmed, that Conſtantine was preſent *at that conference between Diocletian and Galerius, in which they reſolved that Maximin Daia ſhould be choſen* Cæſar, *and yet that he*

 accompanied

accompanied Diocletian to the assembly in which that choice was declared; for Constantine, says Le Nourry, would never have submitted to the insult of seeing himself publicly rejected, and another chosen.

Here *a wrong inference is drawn from a mistaken fact. The author* d. M. P. *says, that Constantine* "*erat tunc præsens*," *that is,* "*at* "*court*," *or* "*in Nicomedia*," *not that he was present so as to overhear the conference between the two Emperors. My inclinations indeed might lead me to suppose, as Le Nourry does, that Constantine* was *present; for then Lactantius might have received an account of that conference from an ear-witness; but I must not pervert the sense of the author to serve an hypothesis. Granting, however, that Constantine had overheard the conference, and known its result,* that *prudence, which always tempered his ambition, would have prevented him from expressing any discontent at the election of Maximin Daia. The office of* Tribunus

nus primi ordinis *was probably an office which required his attendance on the person of the Emperor*; *and had this* Colonel *or* Captain *of the guards presumed to complain, it would have been treason in the eyes of a Prince violent and overbearing like Galerius.*

10. " *The author* d. M. P. *says, c.* 2. *that* " *Christ was crucified* extremis temporibus " Tiberii Cæsaris; *but Lactantius says, that* " *Christ was crucified in the fifteenth year of* " *Tiberius,* anno quinto decimo. *See* Inst. " iv. 10. *Now, as Tiberius reigned twenty-* " *two years, an event which happened in the* " *fifteenth year of his reign, could not be* " *said to have happened in the* last times *of* " *Tiberius,* [extremis temporibus], *and con-* " *sequently the two authors are inconsistent.*" *p.* 159.

Answ. *Some think, that by* extrema tempora *is to be understood a period at which Tiberius was far advanced in life; and this no doubt suits well enough with the fifteenth year of*

of his reign, for he was then aged sixty-nine. Supposing, however, that the phrase extrema tempora *respected the reign of Tiberius, its inconsistency with what Lactantius says is not obvious. No one ought to require logical precision from an historian; and if the reign of Tiberius were divided into* prima, media, et extrema, *the fifteenth year might surely be estimated* in extremis temporibus Tiberii. *Had the author* d. M. P. *asserted, that Christ was crucified* mediis temporibus Tiberii, *a like scrupulous calculation might have been opposed to that assertion also.*

One thing seems to have escaped the observation of Le Nourry. He argues on the supposition that Lactantius knew or recollected that Tiberius died in the twenty-second *year of his reign. But* where *did Le Nourry learn this? The many books of chronology published in consequence of the invention of printing, enable us moderns to obtain a ready knowledge of æras and dates, so far as it can be obtained.*

Very

Very different was the case in ancient times; and Lactantius might not have remembered, or might not have had any instant opportunity of knowing, that Tiberius reigned twenty-two years. Indeed Lactantius appears, from his Institutes, to have been an inattentive or ill-informed chronologer; for he confounds the year of the baptism of Christ with the year of his passion.

11. "*The author* d. M. P. *says, that Christ* "*suffered* POST diem decimum kalend. A- "prilis, *c.* 2.; *but Lactantius says, that he* "*suffered* ANTE diem decimum kalend. A- "prilis." Inst. iv. 10. Two *dates would not* "*have been assigned to that event by the same* "*author.*" *p.* 160.

Answ. *Lactantius might at different times have assigned different dates to the crucifixion of Christ. Every author must be sensible, at least I am, that if all his words were critically and captiously scrutinized, he would be detected in contradictions, sometimes in the same work,*

work, and frequently when there chances to be a conſiderable ſpace between the compoſition of one work and another. But not to inſiſt on this, or on the uncertainty of arguments drawn from the ſuppoſed accuracy of an inaccurate tranſcriber, the true and ſatisfactory anſwer is, and Le Nourry knew it well, that the ambiguous method of computing a Roman day gives reaſon to believe, that, in common uſage, " poſt *decimum diem,*" *and* " ante *decimum* " *diem,*" *meant the ſame thing, namely,* " *the* " tenth *day;*" *and that the former phraſe implied* " *after the* tenth *day had* begun," *and the latter* " *before the* tenth *day was fi-* " *niſhed.*"

12. *Jortin remarks,* " *That the word* uti- " que *is frequently employed by Lactantius,* " *and ſeldom by the author* d M. P." Miſcellaneous Obſervations, ii. 232.

Anſw. *The remark, although rather of the minuteſt ſort, is juſt; but the inference from it, that Lactantius did not compoſe the work*

d.

d. M. P. *seems erroneous. From accident, or caprice, or from change in taſte, an author may in one treatiſe uſe a word often, and in others leſs frequently. Lactantius, when writing on philoſophical ſubjects in a diffuſe ſtyle, might have often employed the word* utique; *and yet, as the word is rather ornamental than neceſſary, he might have employed it leſs frequently, or have omitted it altogether, when writing in a conciſe ſtyle on a ſubject of hiſtory. This is not merely* conjecture, *it is* fact; *for when Lactantius introduces narrative into his great work the Inſtitutes, he omits this favourite word* utique. *See* Inſtit. v. 2. 11.

The chief arguments for proving that Lactantius is the author of the treatiſe d. M. P. *ſhall now be ſtated.*

Lactantius ſays, that he reſided at Nicomedia, a Greek city, when the Chriſtian church was razed. The author of the treatiſe d. M. P. *does not ſay that he himſelf was in Nicomedia at that time, yet his deſcription of the*

razing of the church is so lively, that one can hardly doubt of his having been an eye-witness to it. Besides, other passages in that treatise introduced occasionally and without affectation, shew the author to have been particularly acquainted with Nicomedia and its neighbourhood.

We know, that Lactantius was a rhetorician, that he taught rhetoric at Nicomedia; but that having few scholars, by reason that Nicomedia was a Greek city, he betook himself to the writing of books. So St Jerom: "Nicomediæ rhetoricam docuit; at penuriâ discipularum, ob Græcam videlicet civitatem, ad scribendum se contulit." The worst enemies of the author d. M. P. *admit that he was a rhetorician, and insult him on that account.*

In the only MS. hitherto discovered of the treatise d. M. P. *the author is styled* Lucius Cecilius [Lycii *being confessedly an error for* Lucii], *in all the MSS. of Lactantius in which his name is written at full length, he*

is

is ſtyled Lucius, *and in various MSS. he is ſtyled* Lucius Cecilius.

Lactantius had a dear Chriſtian friend named Donatus, *and ſo had the author* d. M. P.

Virgil was held in admiration by Lactantius, who calls him, by way of eminence, the Poet, *and frequently quotes him, and borrows his phraſes. The author* d. M. P. *from a like predilection for Virgil, introduces ſeveral paſſages of that poet into his narrative; and he not only quotes his verſes, but alſo employs his phraſes. This is the more remarkable; becauſe to quote verſes, and to employ poetical phraſes in an hiſtorical compoſition, may be cenſured as a vitious mode of writing.*

Lactantius, and the author d. M. P. *make ſuch frequent uſe of the ablative abſolute, that it ſeems to border on affectation.*

The diligence of critics has aſſembled a multitude of phraſes common to Lactantius and the author d. M. P. *A few ſhall be ſelected, ſome*

of which are singular enough, and hardly to be met with elsewhere.

" Justitia" *is used by both authors for* " *the* " *true religion*," *or* " *Christian faith and* " *practice*." Inst. v. 7. 12. *&c.*; d. M. P. 2.

" *Malæ bestiæ*" *for* " *tyrants and persecu-* " *tors*." Inst. v. 23. d. M. P. 2.

" *Roma* — manus suas in totum orbem " *terrâ marique* porrexit." Inst. vii. 15. — " *Alas suas* in Orientem Occidentemque " porrexit." Epitome, 51. — " *Ecclesia* — " manus suas in Orientem Occidentemque " porrexit." d. M. P. 3.

" *Te Providentia summæ Divinitatis* ad " fastigium *principale provexit*." Inst. vii. 26.—" *Quasi hujus rei gratiâ* provectus es- " set ad *illud* principale fastigium." d. M. P. 4.

" *Ut* — *catenatam* mortem cum suis ter- " roribus triumpharet." Inst. iv. 5.—" Se- " culum

" culum cum ſuis terroribus triumphaſti." d. M. P. 16.

" *Alii* ſuo proprio adverſus juſtos odio." Inſtit. v. 11.—" *Quidam* proprio adverſus " Chriſtianos odio." d. M. P. 11. *Both paſſages relate to the perſecution under the Emperors Diocletian and Galerius.*

" Regnum per manus *filio* tradidit." Inſtit. ii. 4.—" Imperium per manus tradidit." d. M. P. 24.

" *Quatenus*" *is often uſed by Lactantius inſtead of* " *quomodo.*" Inſtit. i. 21.; iv. 27.; vii. 6. d. Opificio Dei. 6.—" *Quærebat* qua- " tenus *ſe à periculo impendente muniret.*" d. M. P. 26.

" Inſuſtentabili *dominatione vexabit orbem.*" Inſt. vii. 16.—" Inſuſtentabili *dolore uſque ad rabiem mentis elatus eſt.*" d. M. P. 49. *The word* inſuſtentabilis *is exceedingly unuſual.*

There is one coincidence of expreſſion more remarkable than any hitherto mentioned. The

author

author d. M. P. 38. *in describing the enormities of Maximin Daia, says,* " Vincit offi-
" cium linguæ sceleris magnitudo." *And Lactantius,* Instit. vi. 23. *uses the very same words. Had the expression been metrical, two authors might possibly have borrowed it from some Poet whose works are not extant; but the expression, however pompous, is prose, and cannot be reduced to any metrical numbers.*

Add to all this, that St Jerom, in his Catalogue of Ecclesiastical writers, expressly reckons among the works of Lactantius, a treatise thus described, de Persecutione, lib. i.

Now, supposing Lactantius and the author d. M. P. *to have been different persons, let us see what will be the probable hypothesis concerning them.*

In the year 303 *of the vulgar æra, there resided at Nicomedia, a Greek city, two Latin rhetoricians, both of them Christians, and both of them bearing the name of* Lucius. *And there is no better reason for supposing that the*

the one bore the name of Cecilius, *than that the other did. Each of them had a beloved Chriſtian friend named* Donatus: *the one wrote a treatiſe concerning the perſecution, the other, a treatiſe, in which the laſt and greateſt perſecution is minutely deſcribed: the ſtyle of the one and of the other is ſuperior to the general ſtyle of that age in which they lived: equally admirers of Virgil, they delighted in alluſions to his works, and they quoted paſſages from him: in the writings of each there is a frequent and remarkable coincidence of expreſſion, together with an immoderate uſe of the ablative abſolute: one complete ſentence, without the variation of a ſingle letter, is to be found in both of them; a ſentence not borrowed from any poet, but merely proſe, and ſo uncommon withal, that it is not to be found any where, except in the Inſtitutes of Lactantius and in the treatiſe* d. M. P.

Perhaps it could not be concluded from any of thoſe circumſtances taken ſeparately, that Lactantius

Lactantius wrote the treatise d. M. P. *but when all of them are taken together, the improbability that Lactantius was a different person from the author* d. M. P. *appears great indeed!*

Some of the arguments here urged were not known to Le Nourry; and as to those which had come within his knowledge, he touches them in a slight and illogical way. Thus, he says, that two different writers might have quoted Virgil, that they might, by accident, have employed similar phrases, and that, at any rate, it was natural for contemporary authors to express themselves in the common style of their age. Such observations may satisfy a superficial reader, but men of study and discernment will require more precision. When the probability of a fact depends on various circumstances of evidence, it will not follow, because each *of them separately considered proves nothing, that* all *of them taken together prove nothing. If a person should attempt*

tempt to shew that two treatises were composed by the same author, merely because verses from Virgil occur in both treatises, his attempt would be ridiculous. But enough has been already said on the subject of the treatise d. M. P. *to shew that the merits of the present controversy are not affected by this observation of Le Nourry. Neither does Le Nourry well account for the similarity of style discernible in the works of Lactantius and in the treatise* d. M. P. *for their style bears small resemblance to any of the other writings of that age.*

Le Nourry is much embarrassed with the expression "vincit officium linguæ sceleris magnitudo," which occurs both in the Institutes of Lactantius and in the treatise d. M. P. *At first, he supposes that the expression might have occurred to two different writers; but, as if dissatisfied with his own hypothesis, he adds, p.* 353. *that the one writer might have borrowed it from the other. As he admits, p.* 126. *that the author* d. M. P. *wrote before*

the publication of the Inſtitutes of Lactantius, Le Nourry muſt ſuppoſe Lactantius, whoſe ſtyle he praiſes exceedingly, to have copied an obſcure *and* inelegant *author; and yet he produces no argument whatever in aid of this ſuppoſition.*

With ſtill leſs ſemblance of reaſon, Lardner ſuppoſes that the author d. M. P. *borrowed the expreſſion from Lactantius.* Credibility, *part* ii. *vol.* 7. *p.* 95. *A ſtrange conjecture! that one who wrote in* 313 *or* 314, *ſhould have borrowed from a work not publiſhed for ſeveral years after.*

With reſpect to Donatus, Le Nourry boldly affirms, that the confeſſor of that name, to whom the author d. M. P. *inſcribed his treatiſe, could not have been* that *Donatus to whom Lactantius inſcribed his treatiſe* de Ira Dei. *The treatiſe* d. M. P. *ſays he, was written about the year* 313, *and the treatiſe* de Ira Dei *about the year* 321. *Now, if Lactantius in* 313 *had celebrated the glorious confeſſion, ſufferings,*

ſufferings, and long impriſonment of Donatus, he would not, in 321, *have called the ſame Donatus,* " in expreſs words, *a novice, one* " *entangled in the affairs of this world, and* " *not ſufficiently acquainted with the Chri-* " *ſtian doctrine.*" [Expreſſis verbis, *tyro,— implicitus ſæculi negotiis, et Chriſtianâ doctrinâ non ſatis imbutus. p.* 145.]

It is certain, however ſtrange, that what Le Nourry ſays on this ſubject is mere fiction.

This has been ſhewn by an anonymous critic [*ſuppoſed to have been M. la Croze*] *in* Journal Literaire, *t.* vii. *part* 1. *p.* 18. à la Haye, 1715, *and by Nicolas de Leſtocq, Dean of Amiens, in a diſſertation prefixed to the ſecond volume of* Lactantii opera *by Lenglet du Freſnoy. Thoſe writers juſtly obſerve, that not any one of the expreſſions quoted by Le Nourry is to be found in the treatiſe* de Ira Dei *addreſſed to Donatus ; that ſome of them, indeed, occur in the treatiſe* de Opificio Dei, *written before the perſecution, and addreſſed,*

not to Donatus, but to Demetrianus, a young ſtudent in rhetoric; and, which is very remarkable, that the appellation of " tyro," *ſaid to have been given* " expreſſis verbis" *to Donatus, does not occur even in the addreſs to Demetrianus.*

Lardner, taking up Le Nourry's argument, enforces it in a manner ſomewhat more plauſible. " *Lactantius*," *ſays he,* " *does not call* " *Donatus an illuſtrious confeſſor; he even* " *ſpeaks to him* as to a novice, *who needed to* " *be inſtructed and fortified, leſt he ſhould be* " *miſled by the authority of the wiſe men of* " *the world.*" Credibility, *part* ii. *vol.* 7. *p.* 93. [*Quorum error, quia maximus eſt, et ad evertendum vitæ humanæ ſtatum ſpectat, coarguendus eſt a nobis, ne ipſe fallaris, impulſus auctoritate hominum, qui ſe putant eſſe ſapientes.* de Ira Dei, *c.* 1.]

Here *Lardner does not, like Le Nourry, ſay that Lactantius* in expreſs words *called Donatus*

Donatus a novice, *but that he ſpake to him* as to a novice.

Many good and ſincere men, and even many of thoſe who are termed experienced Chriſtians, have erred in their notions of the Divine attributes. The warning that Lactantius gave to Donatus is equally well ſuited to all *Chriſtians, whether novices or not; for all of them are expoſed to the aſſaults of irreligious cavil, and arrogant diſputation.*

In order to elude the teſtimony of St Jerom, Le Nourry ſays, that " *that father ſpeaks of* " *a treatiſe* de Perſecutione, *but the treatiſe* " *in queſtion is* de Mortibus Perſecutorum." *And Lardner adds, that Honorius of Autun in the 12th century, and Trithemius in the 14th, mention the treatiſe* de Perſecutione, *but ſay nothing of the treatiſe* d. M. P.

The evidence of Honorius of Autun and Trithemius is of no moment: they are mere copiſts, and they ſpeak on the authority of St Jerom,

Jerom, and not from their own knowledge of the works of Lactantius.

With respect to St Jerom, it will be remarked, that, in the same catalogue, he speaks of Tertullian's treatise de Persecutione, *and yet no one doubts that he meant to speak of the treatise* de Fuga; *and this shews that St Jerom did not observe that scrupulous accuracy of language which some critics look for in authors.*

To the treatise in question St Jerom gave the title de Persecutione, *the copist prefixed to it the title* de Mortibus Persecutorum. *Neither the one title nor the other expresses the whole contents of the work, and, originally, it may have had both titles.*

Copists appear to have varied the titles of books according to their fancy or caprice. Thus the treatise addressed by Lactantius to Demetrianus has, in different MSS. four *different titles.* 1. de Opificio Dei vel formatione hominis. 2. Opus Mundi ac Opificium Dei. 3. de

3. de Opificio Dei. 4. de Opificio Hominis. *Now, supposing that the only MSS. of it extant at this day were those with the title* de Opificio Hominis, *and that St Jerom had said that Lactantius wrote a treatise* de Opificio Dei, *it might have been concluded, with more plausibility than there is in the argument of Le Nourry, that the words of St Jerom were not applicable to the treatise* de Opificio Hominis; *and yet that conclusion would have been utterly erroneous.*

N. de Lestocq observes, that in the MSS. of the library of the King of France, the first book of the Divine Institutes has this title, de Falsa Religione, [N° 1662.]; *and this,* de Religione et rebus divinis, [N° 1663.]; *and, which is more singular still, that the MS.* N° 1667. *has this title,* Lucii Cæcilii Firmiani Lactantii liber incipit adversus Gentes. *Here the name of the author is given at full length, while the words,* Divinæ Institutiones, *the principal part of the title, are omitted. These examples*

examples ſhew that no concluſion againſt the identity of a work can be drawn from any variations that copiſts may have thought fit to make in its title.

After having reviewed the evidence on both ſides, I conclude with Baluze, Moſheim, and other eminent critics, that the treatiſe d. M. P. *was written by Lactantius.*

There are who think, that it is of no moment whether the work be aſcribed to Lactantius, or to an unknown writer contemporary with him. But this opinion ſeems to have been adopted from indolence of mind, and an averſion to the trouble attending on critical inquiries. The author d. M. P. *is the only Roman hiſtorian now extant, who, living at the commencement of the fourth century, recorded the events of that period; and it is of moment to be aſſured, that, ſo far from being an obſcure perſon, of whom we have no account, he was one whoſe name and character, and literary accompliſhments, are known.*

In

In the beginning of the fourth century there might have lived a Lucius Cæcilius, *an honeſt and zealous Chriſtian, capable of recording the public events of his times, but unacquainted with the court of Diocletian or Galerius; ſuch a man might have been relied on as to the narrative of public events, but his credibility would have extended no farther.*

Lactantius, on the contrary, muſt have had ample opportunities of information. It is hardly poſſible to ſuppoſe that he was not perſonally acquainted with the Emperor Conſtantine while yet a private perſon during their joint reſidence at Nicomedia; and it is admitted, that Conſtantine, ſoon after his acceſſion to ſupreme power, conferred an office of great truſt and importance on Lactantius. And if we once ſuppoſe Lactantius to have been early acquainted with Conſtantine, we may account, in a ſatisfactory manner, for the knowledge which he diſplays of a variety of ſecret occurrences at the Imperial court.

ERRATA.

Pag.	*lin.*	
170.	6.	for "or" read "nor"
185.	16.	for "*evictio*" read "*evectio*"
223.	13.	for "INSTINCTUS." read "IN-STINCTU."

OF

THE MANNER IN WHICH

The PERSECUTORS died.

Chap. I.

THE Lord has heard thoſe ſupplications which you, my beſt-beloved Donatus, pour forth in his preſence all the day long, and the ſupplications of the reſt of our brethren, who, by a glorious confeſſion, have obtained an everlaſting crown, the reward of their faith! Behold, all the adverſaries are deſtroyed, and, tranquillity having been reeſtabliſhed throughout the Roman empire, the late oppreſſed church ariſes again, and the temple of God, overthrown by the hands of the wicked, is built with more glory than before. For God has raiſed up princes to reſcind the impious and ſanguinary edicts of

the tyrants, and provide for the welfare of mankind: ſo that now the cloud of paſt times is diſpelled, and peace and ſerenity gladden all hearts. And after the furious whirlwind and black tempeſt, the heavens are now become calm, and the wiſhed-for light has ſhone forth; and now God, the hearer of prayer, by his divine aid, has lifted his proſtrate and afflicted ſervants from the ground, has brought to an end the united devices of the wicked, and wiped off the tears from the faces of thoſe who mourned. They who inſulted over the Divinity, lie low; they who caſt down the holy temple, are fallen with more tremendous ruin; and the tormentors of juſt men have poured out their guilty ſouls amidſt plagues inflicted by Heaven, and amidſt deſerved tortures. For God delayed to puniſh them, that, by great and marvellous examples, he might teach poſterity, that he alone is God, and that, with fit vengeance, he executes judgement on the proud, the impious, and the perſecutors.

Of

Of the end of thoſe men I have thought good to publiſh a narrative, that all who are afar off, and all who ſhall ariſe hereafter, may learn how the Almighty manifeſted his power and ſovereign greatneſs in rooting out and utterly deſtroying the enemies of his name. And this will become evident, when I relate *who* were the perſecutors of the church from the time of its firſt conſtitution, and *what* were the puniſhments by which the Divine Judge, in his ſeverity, took vengeance on them.

Chap. II.

In the latter days of the Emperor Tiberius, in the conſulſhip of Ruberius Geminus and Fuſius Geminus, and on the tenth of the kalends of April, [23d of March], as I find it written, Jeſus Chriſt was crucified by the Jews. After he had riſen again on the third day, he gathered together his

apoſtles, whom fear, at the time of his being laid hold on, had put to flight; and while he ſojourned with them forty days, he opened their hearts, interpreted to them the ſcripture, which hitherto had been wrapped up in obſcurity, ordained and fitted them for the preaching of his word and doctrine, and regulated all things concerning the inſtitutions of the New Teſtament: and this having been accompliſhed, a cloud and whirlwind enveloped him, and caught him up from the ſight of men unto heaven.

His apoſtles were at that time eleven in number, to whom were added Matthias, in the room of the traitor Judas, and afterwards Paul. Then were they diſperſed throughout all the earth to preach the goſpel, as the Lord their maſter had commanded them; and during twenty-five years, and until the beginning of the reign of the Emperor Nero, they occupied themſelves in laying the foundations of the church in every province and city.

city. And while Nero reigned, the Apoſtle Peter came to Rome, and, through the power of God committed unto him, wrought certain miracles, and, by turning many to the true religion, built up a faithful and ſtedfaſt temple unto the Lord. When Nero heard of thoſe things, and obſerved, that not only in Rome, but in every other place, a great multitude revolted daily from the worſhip of idols, and, condemning their old ways, went over to the new religion, he, an execrable and pernicious tyrant, ſprung forward to raze the heavenly temple, and deſtroy the true faith. He it was who firſt perſecuted the ſervants of God; he crucified Peter, and ſlew Paul: nor did he eſcape with impunity; for God looked on the affliction of his people; and therefore the tyrant, bereaved of authority, and precipitated from the height of empire, ſuddenly diſappeared, and even the burial-place of that noxious wild beaſt was no where to be ſeen.

This

This has led ſome perſons of extravagant imagination to ſuppoſe, that, having been conveyed to a diſtant region, he is ſtill reſerved alive; and to him they apply the Sibylline verſes concerning "the fugitive, who "ſlew his own mother, being to come from "the uttermoſt boundaries of the earth;" as if he who was the firſt, ſhould alſo be the laſt perſecutor, and thus prove the forerunner of Antichriſt! But we ought not to believe thoſe, who, affirming that the two prophets Enoch and Elias have been tranſlated into ſome remote place that they might attend our Lord when he ſhall come to judgement, alſo fancy that Nero is to appear hereafter, as the forerunner of the devil, when he ſhall come to lay waſte the earth, and overthrow mankind.

Chap. III.

AFTER an interval of ſome years from the death

death of Nero, there arose another tyrant no less wicked, [Domitian], who, although his government was exceedingly odious, for a very long time oppressed his subjects, and reigned in security; until at length he stretched forth his impious hands against the Lord. Having been instigated by evil dæmons to persecute the righteous people, he was then delivered into the power of his enemies, and suffered due punishment. To be murdered in his own palace was not vengeance ample enough: the very memory of his name was erased. For although he had erected many admirable edifices, and rebuilt the capitol, and left other distinguished marks of his magnificence, yet the senate did so persecute his name, as to leave no remains of his statues, or traces of the inscriptions put up in honour of him; and, by most solemn and severe decrees, it branded him, even after death, with perpetual infamy. Thus, the commands of the tyrant having been rescinded,

ed, the church was not only reſtored to her former ſtate, but ſhe ſhone forth with additional ſplendor, and became more and more flouriſhing. And in the times that followed, while many well-deſerving princes guided the helm of the Roman empire, the church ſuffered no violent aſſaults from her enemies, and ſhe extended her hands unto the eaſt and unto the weſt, inſomuch that now there was not any the moſt remote corner of the earth to which the divine religion had not penetrated, or any nation, of manners ſo barbarous, that did not, by being converted to the worſhip of God, become mild and gentle.

Chap. IV.

THIS long peace, however, was afterwards interrupted. Decius appeared in the world, an accurſed wild beaſt, to afflict the church: and *who* but a bad man would perſecute religion?

ligion? It seems as if he had been raised to sovereign eminence, at once to rage against God, and at once to fall; for, having undertaken an expedition against the Carpi, who had then possessed themselves of Dacia and Moesia, he was suddenly surrounded by the barbarians, and slain, together with great part of his army; nor could he be honoured with the rites of sepulture, but stripped and naked, he lay to be devoured by wild beasts and birds; a fit end for the enemy of God!

Chap. V.

And presently Valerian also, in a mood alike frantic, lifted up his impious hands to assault God; and, although his time was short, shed much righteous blood. But God punished him in a new and extraordinary manner, that it might be a lesson to future ages, that the adversaries of Heaven always

receive the juſt recompenſe of their iniquities. He, having been made priſoner by the Perſians, loſt not only that power which he had exerciſed without moderation, but alſo the liberty of which he had deprived others; and he waſted the remainder of his days in the vileſt condition of ſlavery: for Sapores, the King of the Perſians, who had made him priſoner, whenever he choſe to get into his carriage, or to mount on horſeback, commanded the Roman to ſtoop and preſent his back; then ſetting his foot on the ſhoulders of Valerian, he ſaid, with a ſmile of reproach, "*This* is true, and not what the "Romans delineate on board or plaſter." Valerian lived for a conſiderable time under the well-merited inſults of his conqueror; ſo that the Roman name remained long the ſcoff and deriſion of the barbarians: and this alſo was added to the ſeverity of his puniſhment, that, although he had an Emperor for his ſon, he found no one to revenge his captivity.

tivity, and moſt abject and ſervile ſtate; neither indeed was he ever demanded back. Afterward, when he had finiſhed this ſhameful life under ſo great diſhonour, he was flayed, and his ſkin, ſtripped from the fleſh, was dyed with vermilion, and placed in the temple of the gods of the barbarians, that the remembrance of a triumph ſo ſignal might be perpetuated, and that this ſpectacle might always be exhibited to our ambaſſadors, as an admonition to the Romans, that, beholding the ſpoils of their captived Emperor in a Perſian temple, they ſhould not place too great confidence in their own ſtrength.

Now, ſince God ſo puniſhed the ſacrilegious, is it not ſtrange, that any one ſhould afterward have dared to do, or even to deviſe, aught againſt the majeſty of the One God, who governs and ſupports all things!

Chap. VI.

AURELIAN might have recollected the fate of the captived Emperor, yet, being of a nature outrageous and headſtrong, he forgot both *his* ſin, and its puniſhment; and, by deeds of cruelty, irritated the divine wrath. He was not, however, permitted to accompliſh what he had deviſed; for juſt as he began to give a looſe to his rage, he was ſlain. His bloody edicts had not yet reached the more diſtant provinces, when he himſelf lay all bloody on the earth at Cænophrurium in Thrace, aſſaſſinated by his familiar friends, who had taken up groundleſs ſuſpicions againſt him.

Examples of ſuch a nature, and ſo numerous, ought to have deterred ſucceeding tyrants: nevertheleſs they were not only not diſmayed, but, in their miſdeeds againſt God, became more bold and preſumptuous.

Chap. VII.

WHILE Diocletian, that author of ill, and deviſer of miſery, was ruining all things, he could not with-hold his inſults, not even againſt God. This man, by avarice partly, and partly by timid counſels, overturned the Roman empire; for he made choice of three perſons to ſhare the government with him; and thus, the empire having been quartered, armies were multiplied, and each of the four princes ſtrove to maintain a much more conſiderable military force than any ſole Emperor had done in times paſt. There began to be fewer men who paid taxes, than there were who received wages; ſo that the means of the huſbandmen being exhauſted by enormous impoſitions, the farms were abandoned, cultivated grounds became wood-land, and univerſal diſmay prevailed. Beſides, the provinces were divided into minute portions, and

and many presidents, and a multitude of inferior officers, lay heavy on each territory, and almost on each city. There were also many stewards of different degrees, and deputies of presidents. Very few civil causes came before them; but there were condemnations daily, and forfeitures frequently inflicted; taxes on numberless commodities, and those not only often repeated, but perpetual, and, in exacting them, intolerable wrongs.

Whatever was laid on for the maintenance of the soldiery might have been endured; but Diocletian, through his insatiable avarice, would never allow the sums of money in his treasury to be diminished: he was constantly heaping together extraordinary aids and free gifts, that his original hoards might remain untouched and inviolable. He also, when by various extortions he had made all things exceedingly dear, attempted, by an ordinance, to limit their prices. Then much

much blood was ſhed for the verieſt trifles; men were afraid to expoſe aught to ſale, and the ſcarcity became more exceſſive and grievous than ever; until in the end, the ordinance, after having proved deſtructive to multitudes, was, from mere neceſſity, abrogated. To this there were added, a certain endleſs paſſion for building, and, on that account, endleſs exactions from the provinces, for furniſhing wages to labourers and artificers, and ſupplying carriages, and whatever elſe was requiſite to the works which he projected. *Here* public halls, *there* a circus, *here* a mint, and *there* a workhouſe for making implements of war; in one place, an habitation for his Empreſs, and in another, for his daughter. Preſently great part of the city was quitted, and all men removed with their wives and children, as from a town taken by enemies; and when thoſe buildings were completed, to the deſtruction of whole provinces, he ſaid, "They are not

" right,

" right, let them be done on another plan." Then they were to be pulled down, or altered, to undergo perhaps a future demolition. By ſuch folly was he continually endeavouring to equal Nicomedia with the city Rome in magnificence.

I omit mentioning how many periſhed on account of their poſſeſſions or wealth: for ſuch evils were exceedingly frequent, and, through their frequency, appeared almoſt lawful. But this was peculiar to him, that whenever he ſaw a field remarkably well cultivated, or a houſe of uncommon elegance, a falſe accuſation and a capital puniſhment were ſtraitway prepared againſt the proprietor; ſo that it ſeemed as if Diocletian could not be guilty of rapine, without alſo ſhedding blood.

Chap. VIII.

WHAT was the character of his brother in

in empire, Maximian, called *Herculius?* Not unlike to that of Diocletian; and indeed, to render their friendſhip ſo cloſe and faithful as it was, there muſt have been in them a ſameneſs of inclinations and purpoſes, a correſponding will, and unanimity in judgement. Herein alone they were different, that Diocletian was more avaricious and leſs reſolute, and that Maximian, with leſs avarice, had a bolder ſpirit, prone not to good, but to evil. For while he poſſeſſed Italy, itſelf the chief ſeat of empire, and while other very opulent provinces, ſuch as Africa and Spain, were near at hand, he took little care to preſerve thoſe treaſures which he had ſuch fair opportunities of amaſſing. Whenever he ſtood in need of more, the richeſt ſenators were preſently charged, by ſuborned evidences, as guilty of aſpiring to the empire; ſo that the chief luminaries of the ſenate were daily extinguiſhed. And thus the

 treaſury,

treaſury, delighting in blood, overflowed with ill-gotten wealth.

Add to all this, the incontinency of that peſtilent wretch, not only in debauching males, which is hateful and abominable, but alſo in the violation of the daughters of the principal men of the ſtate: for where-ever he journeyed, virgins were ſuddenly torn from the preſence of their parents. In ſuch enormities he placed his ſupreme delight; and to indulge to the utmoſt his luſt and flagitious deſires, was, in his judgement, the felicity of his reign.

I paſs over Conſtantius, a prince unlike the others, and worthy to have had the ſole government of the empire.

Chap. IX.

But the other Maximian, [Galerius], choſen by Diocletian for his ſon-in-law, was worſe, not only than thoſe two princes whom our

our own times have experienced, but worſe than all the bad princes of former days. In this wild beaſt there dwelt a native barbarity, and a ſavageneſs foreign to Roman blood; and no wonder, for his mother was born beyond the Danube, and it was an inroad of the Carpi that obliged her to croſs over and take refuge in New Dacia. The form of Galerius correſponded with his manners. Of ſtature tall, full of fleſh, and ſwollen to a horrible bulk of corpulency: by his ſpeech, geſtures, and looks, he made himſelf a terror to all that came near him. His father-in-law too dreaded him exceſſively. The cauſe was this. Narſeus, King of the Perſians, emulating the example ſet him by his grandfather Sapores, aſſembled a great army, and aimed at becoming maſter of the eaſtern provinces of the Roman empire. Diocletian, apt to be low-ſpirited and timorous in every commotion, and fearing a fate like that of Valerian, would not in perſon encounter

Narſeus; but he ſent Galerius by the way of Armenia, while he himſelf halted in the eaſtern provinces, and anxiouſly watched the event. It is a cuſtom amongſt the barbarians, to take every thing that belongs to them into the field Galerius laid an ambuſh for them, and eaſily overthrew men embarraſſed with the multitude of their followers, and with their baggage. Having put Narſeus to flight, and returned with much ſpoil, his own pride and Diocletian's fears were greatly increaſed. For after this victory he roſe to ſuch a pitch of haughtineſs as to reject the appellation of Cæſar; and when he heard that appellation in letters addreſſed to him, he cried out, with a ſtern look and terrible voice, "How long am I to be *Cæ-*" *ſar?*" Then he began to act extravagantly, inſomuch that, as if he had been a ſecond Romulus, he wiſhed to paſs for and to be called the offſpring of Mars; and that he might appear the iſſue of a divinity, he

was

was willing that his mother Romula ſhould be diſhonoured with the name of adultereſs. But, not to confound the chronological order of events, I delay the recital of his actions; for indeed afterwards, when Galerius got the title of Emperor, his father-in-law having been diveſted of the imperial purple, he became altogether outrageous, and of unbounded arrogance.

While, by ſuch a conduct, and with ſuch aſſociates, Diocles, for *that* was the name of Diocletian before he attained ſovereignty, occupied himſelf in ſubverting the commonweal, there was no evil which his crimes did not deſerve; nevertheleſs he reigned moſt proſperouſly, as long as he forebore to defile his hands with the blood of the juſt; and what cauſe he had for perſecuting them, I come now to explain.

Chap.

Chap. X.

DIOCLETIAN, as being of a timorous diſpoſition, was a ſearcher into futurity, and, during his abode in the eaſt, he began to ſlay victims, that, from their livers, he might obtain a prognoſtic of events; and while he ſacrificed, ſome attendants of his, who were Chriſtians, ſtood by, and they put *the immortal ſign* on their foreheads. At this the dæmons were chaced away, and the holy rites interrupted. The ſoothſayers trembled, unable to inveſtigate the wonted marks on the entrails of the victims. They frequently repeated the ſacrifices, as if the former had been unpropitious; but the victims, ſlain from time to time, afforded no tokens for divination. At length Tages, the chief of the ſoothſayers, either from gueſs or from his own obſervation, ſaid, "There are pro-"fane perſons here, who obſtruct the rites."

Then

Then Diocletian, in furious paſſion, ordered not only all who were aſſiſting at the holy ceremonies, but alſo all who reſided within the palace, to ſacrifice, and in caſe of their refuſal, to be ſcourged. And further, by letters to the commanding officers, he enjoined, that all ſoldiers ſhould be forced to the like impiety, under pain of being diſmiſſed the ſervice. Thus far his rage proceeded; but at that ſeaſon he did nothing more againſt the law and religion of God. After an interval of ſome time he went to winter in Bithynia: and preſently Galerius Cæſar came thither, inflamed with furious reſentment, and purpoſing to excite the inconſiderate old man to carry on that perſecution which he had begun againſt the Chriſtians. I have learned that the cauſe of his fury was as follows.

Chap. XI.

The mother of Galerius, a woman exceedingly ſuperſtitious, was a votary of the gods

gods of the mountains. Being of such a character, she made sacrifices almost every day, and she feasted her servants on the meat offered to idols: but the Christians of her family would not partake of those entertainments; and while she feasted with the Gentiles, they continued in fasting and prayer. On this account she conceived ill-will against the Christians, and, by woman-like complaints, instigated her son, no less superstitious than herself, to destroy them. So, during the whole winter, Diocletian and Galerius held councils together, at which no one else assisted; and it was the universal opinion, that their conferences respected the most momentous affairs of the empire. The old man long opposed the fury of Galerius, and shewed how pernicious it would be to raise disturbances throughout the world, and to shed so much blood; that the Christians were wont with eagerness to meet death; and that it would be enough for him to exclude persons of that religion from the court

and

and the army. Yet he could not reſtrain the madneſs of that obſtinate man. He reſolved, therefore, to take the opinion of his friends. Now this was a circumſtance in the bad diſpoſition of Diocletian, that whenever he determined to do good, he did it without advice, that the praiſe might be all his own; but whenever he determined to do ill, which he was ſenſible would be blamed, he called in many adviſers, that his own fault might be imputed to other men: and therefore a few civil magiſtrates, and a few military commanders, were admitted to give their counſel; and the queſtion was put to them according to priority of rank. Some, through perſonal ill-will towards the Chriſtians, were of opinion, that they ought to be cut off, as enemies of the gods, and adverſaries of the eſtabliſhed religious ceremonies. Others thought differently; but having underſtood the will of Galerius, they, either from dread of diſpleaſing, or from a deſire of gratifying

 him,

him, concurred in the opinion given againſt the Chriſtians. Yet not even then could the Emperor be prevailed upon to yield his aſſent. He determined above all to conſult his gods; and, to that end, he diſpatched a ſoothſayer to inquire of Apollo at Miletus, whoſe anſwer was ſuch as might be expected from an enemy of the divine religion. So Diocletian was drawn over from his purpoſe. But although he could ſtruggle no longer againſt his friends, and againſt Cæſar and Apollo, yet ſtill he attempted to obſerve ſuch moderation as to command the buſineſs to be carried through without bloodſhed; whereas Galerius would have had all perſons burnt alive who refuſed to ſacrifice.

Chap. XII.

A FIT and auſpicious day was ſought out for the accompliſhment of this undertaking; and the feſtival of the god Terminus, celebrated

brated on the seventh of the kalends of March, [23d February], was chosen, in preference to all others, to terminate, as it were, the Christian religion.

" That day, the harbinger of death, arose,
" First cause of ill, and long enduring woes;"

of woes which befell not only the Christians, but the whole earth. When that day dawned, in the eighth consulship of Diocletian, and seventh of Maximian, suddenly, while it was yet hardly light, the prefect, together with chief commanders, tribunes, and officers of the treasury, came to the church in Nicomedia, and the gates having been forced open, they searched every where for an image of the divinity. The books of the Holy Scriptures were found, and they were committed to the flames: the utensils and furniture of the church were abandoned to pillage: all was rapine, confusion, tumult. That church, situated on rising ground,

was within view of the palace; and Diocletian and Galerius ſtood, as if on a watch-tower, diſputing long whether it ought to be ſet on fire. The ſentiment of Diocletian prevailed, who dreaded leſt, ſo great a fire being once kindled, ſome part of the city might be burnt; for there were many and large buildings that ſurrounded the church. Then the pretorian guards came in battle-array, with axes and other iron inſtruments; and having been let looſe every where, they, in a few hours, levelled that very lofty edifice with the ground.

Chap. XIII.

NEXT day an edict was publiſhed, depriving the Chriſtians of all honours and dignities; ordaining alſo, that, without any diſtinction of rank or degree, they ſhould be ſubjected to tortures, and that every ſuit at law ſhould be received againſt them; while,

on

on the other hand, they were debarred from being plaintiffs in queſtions of wrong, adultery, or theft; and, finally, that they ſhould neither be capable of freedom, nor have right of ſuffrage. A certain perſon tore down this edict, and cut it in pieces, improperly indeed, but with high ſpirit, ſaying in ſcorn, "Theſe are the triumphs of Goths "and Sarmatians" Having been inſtantly ſeized and brought to judgement, he was not only tortured, but burnt alive, in the forms of law; and having diſplayed admirable patience under ſufferings, he was conſumed to aſhes.

Chap. XIV.

But Galerius, not ſatisfied with the tenor of the edict, ſought in another way to gain on the Emperor. That he might urge him to exceſs of cruelty in perſecution, he employed

ployed private emiſſaries to ſet the palace on fire; and ſome part of it having been burnt, the blame was laid on the Chriſtians, as public enemies; and the very appellation of *Chriſtian* grew odious on account of that fire. It was ſaid, that the Chriſtians, in concert with the eunuchs, had plotted to deſtroy the princes; and that both of the princes had well nigh been burnt alive in their own palace. Diocletian, ſhrewd and intelligent as he always choſe to appear, ſuſpected nothing of the contrivance; but, inflamed with anger, immediately commanded that all his own domeſtics ſhould be tortured to force a confeſſion of the plot. He ſat on his tribunal, and ſaw innocent men tormented by fire to make diſcovery. All magiſtrates, and all who had ſuperintendency in the imperial palace, obtained ſpecial commiſſions to adminiſter the torture; and they ſtrove with each other

who

who ſhould be firſt in bringing to light the conſpiracy. No circumſtances, however, of the fact were detected any where; for no one applied the torture to any domeſtics of Galerius. He himſelf was ever with Diocletian, conſtantly urging him, and never allowing the paſſions of the inconſiderate old man to cool. Then, after an interval of fifteen days, he attempted a ſecond fire; but that was perceived quickly, and extinguiſhed. Still, however, its author remained unknown. On that very day, Galerius, who, in the middle of winter, had prepared for his departure, ſuddenly hurried out of the city, proteſting, that he fled to eſcape being burnt alive.

Chap. XV.

And now Diocletian raged, not only againſt his own domeſtics, but indiſcriminately againſt all; and he began by forcing his daughter

daughter Valeria, and his wife Priſca, to be polluted by ſacrificing. Eunuchs, once the moſt powerful, and who had chief authority at court and with the Emperor, were ſlain. Preſbyters, and other officers of the church, were ſeized, without evidence, by witneſſes or confeſſion, condemned, and, together with their families, led to execution. In burning alive no diſtinction of ſex or age was regarded: and, becauſe of their great multitude, they were not burnt one after another, but a herd of them were encircled with the ſame fire; and ſervants, having mill-ſtones tied about their necks, were caſt into the ſea. Nor was the perſecution leſs grievous on the reſt of the people of God; for the judges, diſperſed through all the temples, ſought to compel every one to ſacrifice. The priſons were crowded, tortures, hitherto unheard of, were invented, and, leſt juſtice ſhould be inadvertently adminiſtered to a Chriſtian, altars were placed in the courts of juſtice,

hard

hard by the tribunal, that every litigant might offer incenſe before his cauſe could be heard. Thus judges were no otherwiſe approached than divinities. Mandates alſo had gone to Maximian Herculius, and Conſtantius, requiring their concurrence in the execution of the edicts; for in matters even of ſuch mighty importance their opinion was never once aſked. Herculius, a perſon of no merciful temper, yielded ready obedience, and enforced the edicts throughout his dominions of Italy. Conſtantius, on the other hand, left he ſhould have ſeemed to diſſent from the injunctions of his ſuperiors, permitted the demolition of churches, mere walls, and capable of being built up again; but he preſerved entire that true temple of God, which is the human body.

Chap. XVI.

THUS was all the earth afflicted; and

from eaſt to weſt, except in the territories of Gaul, three ravenous wild beaſts continued to rage.

" Had I a hundred mouths, a hundred tongues,
" A voice of braſs, and adamantine lungs,
" Not half the dreadful ſcene could I diſcloſe,"

or recount the puniſhments inflicted by the rulers in every province on religious and innocent men.

But what need of a particular recital of thoſe things, eſpecially to you, my beſt-beloved Donatus, who, above all others, was expoſed to the ſtorm of that violent perſecution? for when you had fallen into the hands of the Prefect Flaccinian, no puny murderer, and afterwards of Hierocles, who from a deputy became Preſident of Bithynia, the author and adviſer of the perſecution, and, laſt of all, into the hands of his ſucceſſor Priſcillian, you diſplayed to mankind a pattern of invincible magnanimity. Having

ving been nine times expoſed to racks and diverſified torments, nine times, by a glorious profeſſion of your faith, you foiled the adverſary; in nine combats you ſubdued the devil and his choſen ſoldiers; and, by nine victories, you triumphed over this world and its terrors. How pleaſing the ſpectacle to God, when he beheld you a conqueror, yoking in your chariot not white horſes, or enormous elephants, but thoſe very men who had led captive the nations! After this ſort to lord it over the lords of the earth is triumph indeed! Now, by your valour were they conquered, when you ſet at defiance their flagitious edicts, and, through ſtedfaſt faith, and the fortitude of your ſoul, you routed all the vain terrors of tyrannical authority. Againſt you neither ſcourges, nor iron claws, nor fire, nor ſword, nor various kinds of torture, availed aught; and no violence could bereave you of your fidelity and perſevering reſolution. This it is

to be a diſciple of God, and this it is to be a ſoldier of Chriſt; a ſoldier whom no enemy can diſlodge, or wolf ſnatch, from the heavenly camp; no artifice enſnare, or pain of body ſubdue, or torments overthrow. At length, after thoſe nine glorious combats, in which the devil was vanquiſhed by you, he dared not to enter the liſts again with one, whom, by repeated trials, he had found unconquerable; and he abſtained from challenging you any more, leſt you ſhould have laid hold on the garland of victory already ſtretched out to you; an unfading garland, which, although you have not at preſent received it, is laid up in the kingdom of the Lord for your virtue and deſerts. But let us now return to the courſe of our narrative.

Chap. XVII.

THE wicked plan having been carried into execution,

execution, Diocletian, whom prosperity had now abandoned, set out instantly for Rome, *there* to celebrate the commencement of the twentieth year of his reign. That solemnity was performed on the twelfth of the kalends of December, [20th November]; and suddenly the Emperor, unable to bear the Roman freedom of speech, peevishly and impatiently burst away from the city. The kalends of January [1st of January] approached, at which day the consulship, for the ninth time, was to be offered to him; yet, rather than continue thirteen days longer in Rome, he chose that his first appearance as consul should be at Ravenna. Having, however, begun his journey in winter, amidst intense cold and incessant rains, he contracted a slight but lingering disease: it harassed him without intermission; so that he was obliged, for the most part, to be carried in a litter. Then, at the close of summer, he made a circuit along the banks of the Danube,

nube, and so came to Nicomedia. His disease had now become more grievous and oppressing; yet he caused himself to be brought out, in order to dedicate that circus, which, at the conclusion of the twentieth year of his reign, he had erected. Immediately he grew so languid and feeble, that prayers for his life were put up to all the gods. Then suddenly, on the ides of December, [13th December], there was heard in the palace sorrow, and weeping, and lamentation, and the courtiers ran to and fro; there was silence throughout the city, and a report went of the death, and even of the burial, of Diocletian: but early on the morrow it was suddenly rumoured, that he still lived: at this the countenance of his domestics and courtiers changed from melancholy to gay. Nevertheless, there were who suspected his death to be kept secret until the arrival of Galerius Cæsar, lest, in the mean while, the soldiery should attempt some change in the government;

government; and this ſuſpicion grew ſo univerſal, that no one would believe the Emperor alive, until, on the kalends of March, [1ſt March], he appeared in public; but ſo wan, his illneſs having laſted almoſt a year, as hardly to be known again. The fit of ſtupor, reſembling death, happened on the ides of December; and although he in ſome meaſure recovered, yet he never attained to perfect health again; for he became diſordered in his judgement, being at certain times inſane, and at others of ſound mind.

Chap. XVIII.

WITHIN a few days Galerius Cæſar arrived, not to congratulate his father-in-law on the re-eſtabliſhment of his health, but to force him to reſign the empire. Already he had urged Maximian Herculius to the like purpoſe, and, by the alarm of civil wars, terrified the old man into compliance; and he

he now assailed Diocletian. At first, in gentle and friendly terms, he said, that age and growing infirmities disabled Diocletian for the charge of the commonweal, and that he had need to give himself some repose after his labours. Galerius, in confirmation of his argument, produced the example of Nerva, who laid the weight of empire on Trajan.

But Diocletian made answer, that it was unfit for one who had held a rank, eminent above all others and conspicuous, to sink into the obscurity of a low station; neither indeed was it safe, because, in the course of so long a reign, he must unavoidably have made many enemies: That the case of Nerva was very different: he, after having reigned a single year, felt himself, either from age, or from inexperience in business, unequal to affairs so momentous; and therefore threw aside the helm of government, and returned to that private life in which he had

had already grown old. But, Diocletian added, that if Galerius wiſhed for the title of Emperor, there was nothing to hinder its being conferred on him and Conſtantius, as well as on Maximian Herculius.

Galerius, whoſe imagination already graſped at the whole empire, ſaw that little but an unſubſtantial name would accrue to him from this propoſal; and therefore replied, that the ſettlement made by Diocletian himſelf ought to be inviolable; a ſettlement which provided, that there ſhould be two of higher rank veſted with ſupreme power, and two others, of inferior, to aſſiſt them. Eaſily might concord be preſerved between *two* equals, never amongſt *four*; that he, if Diocletian would not reſign, muſt conſult his own intereſts, ſo as to remain no longer in an inferior rank, and the laſt of that rank; that for fifteen years paſt he had been confined, as an exile, to Illyricum and the banks of the Danube, perpetually ſtruggling

againſt barbarous nations, while others, at their eaſe, governed dominions more extenſive than his, and better civilized.

Diocletian already knew, by letters from Maximian Herculius, all that Galerius had ſpoken at their conference, and alſo that he was augmenting his army; and now, on hearing his diſcourſe, the ſpiritleſs old man burſt into tears, and ſaid, " Be it as you " will."

It remained to chuſe *Cæſars* by common conſent. " But," ſaid Galerius, " why aſk " the advice of Maximian and Conſtantius, " ſince they muſt needs acquieſce in what- " ever we do ?" " Certainly they will," replied Diocletian, " for we muſt elect their " ſons."

Now Maximian Herculius had a ſon, Maxentius, married to the daughter of Galerius, a man of bad and miſchievous diſpoſitions, and ſo proud and ſtubborn withal, that he would never pay the wonted obeiſance

ſance either to his father or father-in-law; and on that account he was hated by them both. Conſtantius alſo had a ſon, Conſtantine, a young man of very great worth, and well meriting the high ſtation of *Cæſar*. The diſtinguiſhed comelineſs of his figure, his ſtrict attention to all military duties, his virtuous demeanor and ſingular affability, had endeared him to the troops, and made him the choice of every individual. He was then at court, having long before been created by Diocletian a tribune of the firſt order.

" What is to be done," ſaid Galerius, " for *that* Maxentius deſerves not the office. " He who, while yet a private man, has " treated me with contumely, how will he " act when once he obtains power?"—" But " Conſtantine is amiable, and will ſo rule, as " hereafter, in the opinion of mankind, to " ſurpaſs the mild virtues of his father."— " Be it ſo, if my inclinations and judgement " are to be diſregarded. Men ought to be

" appointed who are at my diſpoſal, who " will dread me, and never do any thing un- " leſs by my orders."—" Whom then ſhall " we appoint?"—" Severus."—" How! that " dancer, that habitual drunkard, who turns " night into day, and day into night?"— " He deſerves the office, for he has appro- " ved himſelf a faithful paymaſter and pur- " veyor of the army; and indeed I have al- " ready deſpatched him to receive the purple " from the hands of Maximian."—" Well, I " conſent; but whom elſe do you ſuggeſt?" " —Him," ſaid Galerius, pointing out Daia, a young man, half barbarian. Now Ga- lerius had lately beſtowed part of his own name on that youth, and called him *Maxi- min*, in like manner as Diocletian formerly beſtowed on Galerius the name of *Maxi- mian*, for the omen's ſake, becauſe Maxi- mian Herculius had ſerved him with unſha- ken fidelity.—" Who is that you preſent?"— " A kinſman of mine."—" Alas!" ſaid Dio- cletian,

cletian, heaving a deep ſigh, " you do not " propoſe men fit for the charge of public af- " fairs !" —" I have tried them."—" Then, " do *you* look to it, who are about to aſſume " the adminiſtration of the empire : as for " *me*, while I continued Emperor, long and " diligent have been my labours in provi- " ding for the ſecurity of the commonweal ; " and now, ſhould any thing diſaſtrous en- " ſue, the blame will not be mine."

Chap. XIX.

MATTERS having been thus concerted, Diocletian and Galerius went in proceſſion to publiſh the nomination of *Cæſars*. Every one looked at Conſtantine ; for there was no doubt that the choice would fall on him. The troops preſent, as well as the chief ſoldiers of the other legions, who had been ſummoned to the ſolemnity, fixed their eyes on Conſtantine, exulted in the hope of his approaching

approaching election, and occupied themſelves in prayers for his proſperity. Near three miles from Nicomedia there is an eminence, on the ſummit of which Galerius formerly received the purple; and *there* a pillar, with the ſtatue of Jupiter, was placed. Thither the proceſſion went. An aſſembly of the ſoldiers was called. Diocletian, with tears, harangued them, and ſaid, that he was become infirm, that he needed repoſe after his fatigues, and that he would reſign the empire into hands more vigorous and able, and at the ſame time appoint new *Cæſars*. The ſpectators, with the utmoſt earneſtneſs, waited for the nomination. Suddenly he declared, that the *Cæſars* were Severus and Maximin. The amazement was univerſal: Conſtantine ſtood near in public view, and men began to queſtion amongſt themſelves, whether his name too had not been changed into *Maximin*; when, in the ſight of all, Galerius, ſtretching back his hand,

hand, put Conſtantine aſide, and drew Daia forward; and, having diveſted him of the garb of a private perſon, ſet him in the moſt conſpicuous place. All men wondered who he could be, and from whence he came; but none ventured to interpoſe, or move objections, ſo confounded were their minds at the ſtrange and unlooked-for event. Diocletian took off his purple robe, put it on Daia, and reſumed his own original name of Diocles. He deſcended from the tribunal, and paſſed through Nicomedia in a chariot; and then this old Emperor, like a veteran ſoldier freed from military ſervice, was diſmiſſed into his own country; while Daia, lately taken from the tending of cattle in foreſts to ſerve as a common ſoldier, immediately made one of the life-guard, preſently a tribune, and next day *Cæſar*, obtained authority to trample under foot and oppreſs the empire of the eaſt; a perſon ignorant alike

alike of war and of civil affairs, and from a herdſman become the leader of armies.

Chap. XX.

GALERIUS having effected the expulſion of the two old men, began to conſider himſelf alone as the ſovereign of the Roman empire. Neceſſity had required the appointment of Conſtantius to the firſt rank; but Galerius made ſmall account of one who was of an eaſy temper, and of health declining and precarious. He looked for the ſpeedy death of Conſtantius; and although that prince ſhould recover, it ſeemed not difficult to force him to put off the imperial purple; for what elſe could he do, if preſſed by his three colleagues to abdicate? Galerius had Licinius ever about his perſon, his old and intimate acquaintance, and his earlieſt companion in arms, whoſe counſels he uſed in the management of all affairs; yet he

he would not nominate Licinius to the dignity of *Cæsar*, with the title of *son*; for he purposed to nominate him, in the room of Constantius, to the dignity of *Emperor*, with the title of *brother*, while he himself might hold sovereign authority, and rule over the whole globe with unbounded licence. After that, he meant to have solemnized the *Vicennial* festival, to have conferred on his son Candidianus, then a boy of nine years of age, the office of *Cæsar*, and, in conclusion, to have resigned, as Diocletian had done. And thus, Licinius and Severus being Emperors, and Maximin and Candidianus in the next station of *Cæsars*, he fancied that, environed as it were by an impregnable wall, he should lead an old age of security and peace. Such were his projects; but God, whom he had made his adversary, frustrated all those imaginations.

Chap. XXI.

HAVING thus attained to the higheſt power, he bent his mind to afflict that empire into which he had opened his way. It is the manner and practice of the Perſians, for the people to yield themſelves ſlaves to their kings, and for the kings to treat their people as ſlaves. This flagitious man, from the time of his victories over the Perſians, was not aſhamed inceſſantly to extol ſuch an inſtitution; and he reſolved to eſtabliſh it in the Roman dominions: and becauſe he could not do this by an expreſs law, he ſo acted, in imitation of the Perſian kings, as to bereave men of their liberties. He firſt of all degraded thoſe whom he meant to puniſh, and then, not only were inferior magiſtrates put to the torture by him, but alſo the chief men in cities, and perſons of the moſt eminent rank; and this too in matters of little moment,

moment, and in civil queſtions. Crucifixion was the puniſhment ready prepared in capital caſes, and for leſſer crimes, fetters. Matrons of honourable ſtation were dragged into work-houſes; and when any man was to be ſcourged, there were four poſts fixed in the ground, and to them he was tied, after a manner unknown in the chaſtiſement of ſlaves. What ſhall I ſay of his apartment for ſport, and of his favourite diverſions? He kept bears, moſt reſembling himſelf in fierceneſs and bulk, whom he had collected together during the courſe of his reign. As often as he choſe to indulge his humour, he ordered ſome particular bear to be brought in, and men were thrown to that ſavage animal, rather to be ſwallowed up than devoured; and when their limbs were torn aſunder, he laughed with exceſſive complacency: nor did he ever ſup without being ſpectator of the effuſion of human blood. Men of private ſtation were condemned to

be burnt alive; and he began this mode of execution by edicts againſt the Chriſtians, commanding that, after torture and condemnation, they ſhould be burnt at a ſlow fire. They were fixed to a ſtake; and firſt, a moderate flame was applied to the ſoles of their feet, until the muſcles, contracted by burning, were torn from the bones; then torches, lighted and put out again, were directed to all the members of their bodies; ſo that no part had any exemption. Meanwhile cold water was continually poured on their faces, and their mouths moiſtened, leſt, by reaſon of their jaws being parched, they ſhould expire. At length they did expire, when, after many hours, the violent heat had conſumed their ſkin, and penetrated into their inteſtines. The dead carcaſes were laid on a funeral pile, and wholly burnt; their bones were gathered, ground to powder, and thrown into the river, or into the ſea.

Chap.

Chap. XXII.

And now *that* cruelty, which he had learned in torturing the Chriſtians, became habitual, and he exerciſed it againſt all men indiſcriminately. He was not wont to inflict the ſlighter ſorts of puniſhment, as to baniſh, to impriſon, or to ſend criminals to work in the mines; but to burn, to crucify, to expoſe to wild beaſts, were things done daily, and without heſitation. For ſmaller offences, thoſe of his own houſehold and his ſtewards were chaſtiſed with lances, inſtead of rods, and, in great offences, to be beheaded was an indulgence ſhewn to very few; and it ſeemed as a favour, on account of old ſervices, when one was permitted to die in the eaſieſt manner. But theſe were ſlight evils in the government of Galerius, when compared with what follows. For eloquence was extinguiſhed, pleaders cut off, and the learned

learned in the laws either exiled or ſlain. Uſeful letters came to be viewed in the ſame light as magical and forbidden arts; and all who poſſeſſed them were trampled upon and execrated, as if they had been hoſtile to government, and public enemies. Law was diſſolved, and unbounded licence permitted to judges; to judges choſen from amongſt the ſoldiery, rude and illiterate men, and let looſe upon the provinces, without aſſeſſors to guide or controul them.

Chap. XXIII.

But that which gave riſe to public and univerſal calamity, was the tax impoſed at once on each province and city. Surveyors having been ſpread abroad, and occupied in a general and ſevere ſcrutiny, horrible ſcenes were exhibited, like the outrages of victorious enemies, and the wretched ſtate of captives. Each ſpot of ground was meaſured,

red, vines and fruit-trees numbered, lists taken of animals of every kind, and a capitation-roll made up. In cities, the common people, whether residing within or without the walls, were assembled, the market-places filled with crowds of families, all attended with their children and slaves, the noise of torture and scourges resounded, sons were hung on the rack to force discovery of the effects of their fathers, the most trusty slaves compelled by pain to bear witness against their masters, and wives to bear witness against their husbands. In default of all other evidence, men were tortured to speak against themselves; and no sooner did agony oblige them to acknowledge what they had not, but those imaginary effects were noted down in the lists. Neither youth, nor old age, nor sickness, afforded any exemption. The diseased and the infirm were carried in; the age of each was estimated; and, that the capitation-tax might be enlarged,

years

years were added to the young, and ſtruck off from the old. General lamentation and ſorrow prevailed. Whatever, by the laws of war, conquerors had done to the conquered, the like did this man preſume to perpetrate againſt Romans and the ſubjects of Rome, becauſe his forefathers had been made liable to a like tax impoſed by the victorious Trajan, as a penalty on the Dacians for their frequent rebellions. After this, money was levied for each head, as if a price had been paid for liberty to exiſt; yet full truſt was not repoſed on the ſame ſet of ſurveyors, but others and others ſtill were ſent round to make farther diſcoveries: and thus the tributes were redoubled, not becauſe the new ſurveyors made any freſh diſcoveries, but becauſe they added at pleaſure to the former rates, leſt they ſhould ſeem to have been employed to no purpoſe. Meanwhile the number of animals decreaſed, and men died; nevertheleſs taxes were paid even for

the

the dead; so that no one could either live, or cease to live, without being subject to impositions. There remained mendicants alone, from whom nothing could be exacted, and whom their misery and wretchedness secured from ill treatment. But this pious man had compassion on them; and determining that they should remain no longer in indigence, he caused them all to be assembled, put on board vessels, and sunk in the sea. So merciful was he in making provision that under his administration no man should want! And thus, while he took effectual measures that none, under the feigned pretext of poverty, should elude the tax, he put to death a multitude of real wretches, in violation of every law of humanity.

Chap. XXIV.

Already the judgement of God approached him, and that season ensued in

which his fortunes began to droop and to waſte away. While occupied in the manner that I have deſcribed above, he did not ſet himſelf to ſubvert or expel Conſtantius, but waited for his death, not imagining, however, that it was ſo nigh. Conſtantius, having become exceedingly ill, wrote to Galerius, and requeſted that his ſon Conſtantine might be ſent to ſee him. He had made a like requeſt long before, but in vain; for Galerius meant nothing leſs than to grant it; on the contrary, he laid repeated ſnares for the life of that young man, becauſe he durſt not uſe open violence, leſt he ſhould ſtir up civil wars againſt himſelf, and incur that which he moſt dreaded, the hate and reſentment of the army. Under pretence of manly exerciſe and recreation, he made him combat with wild beaſts: but this device was fruſtrated; for the power of God protected Conſtantine, and, in the very moment of jeopardy, reſcued him from the hands

hands of Galerius. At length, Galerius, when he could no longer avoid complying with the requeſt of Conſtantius, one evening gave Conſtantine a warrant to depart, and commanded him to ſet out next morning with the imperial deſpatches. Galerius meant either to find ſome pretext for detaining Conſtantine, or to forward orders to Severus for arreſting him on the road. Conſtantine diſcerned his purpoſe; and therefore after ſupper, when the Emperor was gone to reſt, he haſted away, carried off from the principal ſtages all the horſes maintained at the public expence, and eſcaped. Next day the Emperor, having purpoſely remained in his bed-chamber until noon, ordered Conſtantine to be called into his preſence; but he learnt that Conſtantine had ſet out immediately after ſupper. Outrageous with paſſion, he ordered horſes to be made ready, that Conſtantine might be purſued and dragged back; and hearing that

all the horſes had been carried off from the great road, he could hardly refrain from tears. Meanwhile Conſtantine, journeying with incredible rapidity, reached his father, who was already about to expire. Conſtantius recommended his ſon to the ſoldiers, delivered the ſovereign authority into his hands, and then died, as his wiſh had long been, in peace and quiet.

Conſtantine Auguſtus, having aſſumed the government, made it his firſt care to reſtore the Chriſtians to the exerciſe of their worſhip and to their God; and ſo began his adminiſtration by re-eſtabliſhing the holy religion.

Chap. XXV.

Some few days after, the portrait of Conſtantine, adorned with laurels, was brought to the pernicious wild beaſt, [that, by receiving that ſymbol, he might acknowledge Conſtantine

Conſtantine in the quality of *Emperor*]. He heſitated long whether to receive it or not, and he was about to commit both the portrait and its bearer to the flames; but his confidents diſſuaded him from a reſolution ſo frantic: they admoniſhed him of the danger, and they repreſented, that, if Conſtantine came with an armed force, all the ſoldiers againſt whoſe inclination obſcure or unknown *Cæſars* had been created, would acknowledge him, and crowd eagerly to his ſtandard. So Galerius, although with the utmoſt unwillingneſs, accepted the portrait, and ſent the imperial purple to Conſtantine, that he might ſeem of his own accord to have received that prince into partnerſhip of power with him. And now his plans were deranged, and he could not, as he intended formerly, admit Licinius, without exceeding the limited number of Emperors. But *this* he deviſed, that Severus, who was more advanced in life, ſhould be named *Emperor*,

and

and that Conſtantine, inſtead of the title of *Emperor*, to which he had been named, ſhould receive that of *Cæſar* in common with Maximin Daia, and ſo be degraded from the ſecond place to the fourth.

Chap. XXVI.

THINGS ſeemed to be arranged in ſome meaſure to the ſatisfaction of Galerius, when another alarm was brought, that his ſon-in-law Maxentius had been declared *Emperor* at Rome. The cauſe was this: Galerius having reſolved, by permanent taxes, to devour the empire, ſoared to ſuch extravagance in folly, as not to allow an exemption from that thraldom even to the Roman people. Tax-gatherers, therefore, were appointed to go to Rome, and make out liſts of the citizens. Much about the ſame time Galerius had reduced the pretorian guards; there remained at Rome a few ſoldiers of that

that body, who, profiting of the opportunity, put ſome magiſtrates to death, and, with the acquieſcence of the tumultuary populace, cloathed Maxentius in the imperial purple. Galerius, on receiving this news, was diſturbed at the ſtrangeneſs of the event, but not much diſmayed. He hated Maxentius, and he could not beſtow on him the dignity of *Cæſar*, already enjoyed by two, [Daia and Conſtantine]; beſides, he thought it enough for him to have once beſtowed that dignity againſt his inclination So he ſent for Severus, exhorted him to regain his dominion and ſovereignty, and he put under his command that army which Maximian Herculius had formerly commanded, that he might attack Maxentius at Rome. *There* the ſoldiers of Maximian had been often times received with every ſort of luxurious accommodation; ſo that they were not only intereſted to preſerve the city, but they alſo longed to fix their reſidence in it.

Maxentius

Maxentius well knew the enormity of his own offences; and although he had, as it were, an hereditary claim to the ſervices of his father's army, and might have hoped to draw it over to himſelf, yet he reflected, that this conſideration might occur to Galerius alſo, and induce him to leave Severus in Illyricum, and march in perſon with his own army againſt Rome. Under ſuch apprehenſions, Maxentius ſought to protect himſelf from the danger that hung over him. To his father, who ſince his abdication reſided in Campania, he ſent the purple, and ſaluted him again *Auguſtus*. Maximian, given to change, eagerly reſumed that purple of which he had unwillingly diveſted himſelf. Meanwhile Severus marched on, and with his troops approached the walls of the city. Preſently the ſoldiers raiſed up their enſigns, abandoned Severus, and yielded themſelves to Maxentius, againſt whom they had come. What remained but flight for Severus, thus deſerted?

deſerted? He was encountered by Maximian, who had reſumed the imperial dignity. On this he took refuge in Ravenna, and ſhut himſelf up *there* with a few ſoldiers. But perceiving that he was about to be delivered up, he voluntarily ſurrendered himſelf, and reſtored the purple to him from whom he had received it; and after this he obtained no other grace but that of an eaſy death; for he was compelled to open his veins, and in that gentle manner expired.

Chap. XXVII.

But Maximian, who knew the outrageous temper of Galerius, began to conſider, that, fired with rage on hearing of the death of Severus, he would march into Italy, and that poſſibly he might be joined by Daia, and ſo bring into the field forces too powerful to be reſiſted. Having therefore fortified Rome, and made diligent proviſion for

a defenſive war, Maximian went into Gaul, that he might give his younger daughter Fauſta in marriage to Conſtantine, and thus win over that prince to his intereſt. Meanwhile Galerius aſſembled his troops, invaded Italy, and advanced towards Rome, reſolving to extinguiſh the ſenate, and put the whole people to the ſword. But he found every thing ſhut and fortified againſt him. There was no hope of carrying the place by ſtorm, and to beſiege it was an arduous undertaking; for Galerius had not brought with him an army ſufficient to inveſt the walls. Probably, having never ſeen Rome, he imagined it to be little ſuperior in ſize to thoſe cities with which he was acquainted. But ſome of his legions, deteſting the wicked enterpriſe of a father againſt his ſon-in-law, and of Romans againſt Rome, renounced his authority, and carried over their enſigns to the enemy. Already had his remaining ſoldiers begun to waver, when Galerius, dreading

dreading a fate like that of Severus, and having his haughty ſpirit broken and humiliated, threw himſelf at the feet of his ſoldiers, and continued to beſeech them that he might not be delivered to the foe, until, by the promiſe of mighty largeſſes, he prevailed on them. Then he retreated from Rome, and fled in great diſorder. Eaſily might he have been cut off in his flight, had any one purſued him, even with a ſmall body of troops. He was aware of his danger, and allowed his ſoldiers to diſperſe themſelves, and to plunder and deſtroy far and wide, that if there were any purſuers, they might be deprived of all means of ſubſiſtence in a ruined country. So the parts of Italy through which that peſtilent band took its courſe were waſted, all things pillaged, matrons forced, virgins violated, parents and huſbands compelled, by torture, to diſcloſe where they had concealed their goods, and their wives and daughters; flocks and herds of cattle

were driven off like ſpoils taken from barbarians. And thus did he, once a Roman Emperor, but now the ravager of Italy, retire into his own territories, after having afflicted all men indiſcriminately with the calamities of war. Long ago indeed, and at the very time of his obtaining ſovereign power, he had avowed himſelf the enemy of the Roman name; and he propoſed, that the empire ſhould be called, not the *Roman*, but the *Dacian* empire.

Chap. XXVIII.

After the flight of Galerius, Maximian, having returned from Gaul, held authority in common with his ſon: but more obedience was yielded to the young man than to the old; for Maxentius had moſt power, and had been longeſt in poſſeſſion of it; and it was to him that Maximian owed on this occaſion the imperial dignity. The old man

was

was impatient at being denied the exercise of uncontrouled sovereignty, and envied his son with a childish spirit of rivalry; and therefore he began to consider how he might expel Maxentius, and resume his ancient dominion. This appeared easy, because the soldiers who deserted Severus had originally served in his own army. He called an assembly of the people of Rome, and of the soldiers, as if he had been to make an harangue on the calamitous situation of public affairs. After having spoken much on that subject, he stretched his hands towards his son, charged him as author of all ills, and prime cause of the calamities of the state, and then tore the purple from his shoulders. Maxentius, thus stripped, leaped headlong from the tribunal, and was received into the arms of the soldiers. Their rage and clamour confounded the unnatural old man, and, like another Tarquin the Proud, he was driven from Rome.

Chap.

Chap. XXIX.

THEN Maximian returned into Gaul; and after having made ſome ſtay in thoſe quarters, he went to Galerius, the enemy of his ſon, that they might confer together, as he pretended, about the ſettlement of the commonweal; but his true purpoſe was, under colour of reconciliation, to find an opportunity of murdering Galerius, and of ſeizing his ſhare of the empire, inſtead of his own, from which he had been every where excluded.

Diocles was at the court of Galerius when Maximian arrived; for Galerius, meaning now to inveſt Licinius with the enſigns of ſupreme power in the room of Severus, had lately ſent for Diocles to be preſent at the ſolemnity. So it was performed in preſence both of him and of Maximian: and thus there

there were ſix who ruled the empire at one and the ſame time.

Now the deſigns of Maximian having been fruſtrated, he took flight, as he had done twice before, and returned into Gaul, with a heart full of wickedneſs, and intending, by treacherous devices, to over-reach Conſtantine, who was not only his own ſon-in-law, but alſo the child of his ſon-in-law; and that he might the more ſucceſsfully deceive, he laid aſide the imperial purple. The Franks had taken up arms: Maximian adviſed the unſuſpecting Conſtantine not to lead all his troops againſt them; and he ſaid, that a few ſoldiers would ſuffice to ſubdue thoſe barbarians. He gave this advice, that an army might be left for him to win over to himſelf, and that Conſtantine, by reaſon of his ſcanty forces, might be overpowered. The young prince believed the advice to be judicious, becauſe given by an aged and experienced commander; and he followed it, becauſe given

given by a father-in-law. He marched, leaving the moſt conſiderable part of his forces behind. Maximian waited a few days; and as ſoon as, by his calculation, Conſtantine had entered the territory of the barbarians, he ſuddenly reſumed the imperial purple, ſeized the public treaſures, after his wont made ample donatives to the ſoldiery, and feigned that ſuch diſaſters had befallen Conſtantine as ſoon after befell himſelf. Conſtantine was preſently informed of thoſe events, and, by marches aſtoniſhingly rapid, he flew back with his army. Maximian, not yet prepared to oppoſe him, was overpowered at unawares, and the ſoldiers returned to their duty. Maximian had poſſeſſed himſelf of Marſeilles, [he fled thither], and ſhut the gates. Conſtantine drew nigh, and ſeeing Maximian on the walls, addreſſed him in no harſh or hoſtile language, and demanded, what he meant, and what it was that he wanted, and why he had acted in a

way

way ſo peculiarly unbecoming him? But Maximian from the walls inceſſantly uttered abuſe and curſes againſt Conſtantine. Then, of a ſudden, the gates on the oppoſite ſide having been unbarred, the beſiegers were admitted into the city. The rebel Emperor, an unnatural parent, and a perfidious father-in-law, was dragged into the preſence of Conſtantine, heard a recital made of his crimes, was diveſted of his imperial robe, and, after this reprimand, obtained his life.

Chap. XXX.

Maximian, having thus forfeited the reſpect due to an Emperor and a father-in-law, grew impatient at his abaſed condition, and, emboldened by impunity, formed new plots againſt Conſtantine. He addreſſed himſelf to his daughter Fauſta, and, as well by intreaties, as by the ſoothing of flattery, ſolicited her to betray her huſband. He pro-

miſed to obtain for her a more honourable alliance than that with Conſtantine; and he requeſted her to allow the bed-chamber of the Emperor to be left open, and to be ſlightly guarded. Fauſta undertook to do whatever he aſked, and inſtantly revealed the whole to her huſband. A plan was laid for detecting Maximian in the very execution of his crime. They placed a baſe eunuch to be murdered inſtead of the Emperor. At the dead of night Maximian aroſe, and perceived all things to be favourable for his inſidious purpoſe. There were few ſoldiers on guard, and theſe too at ſome diſtance from the bed-chamber. However, to prevent ſuſpicion, he accoſted them, and ſaid, that he had had a dream which he wiſhed to communicate to his ſon-in-law. He went in armed, ſlew the eunuch, ſprung forth exultingly, and avowed the murder. At that moment Conſtantine ſhewed himſelf on the oppoſite ſide with a band of ſoldiers; the

dead

dead body was brought out of the bed-chamber; the murderer, taken in the fact, all aghaſt,

" Stood like a ſtone, ſilent and motionleſs; "

while Conſtantine upbraided him for his impiety and enormous guilt. At laſt, Maximian obtained leave that the manner of his death ſhould be at his own choice, and he ſtrangled himſelf.

Thus that mightieſt ſovereign of Rome, who ruled ſo long with exceeding glory, and who celebrated his twentieth anniverſary, thus that moſt haughty man had his neck broken, and ended his deteſtable life by a death baſe and ignominious.

Chap. XXXI.

From Maximian, God, the avenger of religion and of his people, turned his eyes

to Galerius, the author of the accurſed perſecution, that in his puniſhment alſo he might manifeſt the power of his Majeſty. Galerius too was purpoſing to celebrate his twentieth anniverſary; and as, under that pretext, he had, by new taxes payable in gold and ſilver, oppreſſed the provinces, ſo now, that he might recompenſe them by celebrating the promiſed feſtival, he uſed the like pretext for repeating his oppreſſions. Who can relate in fit terms the methods uſed to haraſs mankind in levying the tax, and eſpecially with regard to corn, and the other fruits of the earth? The officers, or rather the executioners, of all the different magiſtrates, ſeized on each individual, and would never let go their hold. No man knew to whom he ought to make payment firſt. There was no diſpenſation given to thoſe who had nothing; and they were required, under pain of being variouſly tortured, inſtantly to pay, notwithſtanding their inability.

inability. Many guards were ſet round, no breathing time was granted, or, at any ſeaſon of the year, the leaſt reſpite from exactions. Different magiſtrates, or the officers of different magiſtrates, frequently contended for the right of levying the tax from the ſame perſons. No threſhing-floor without a tax-gatherer, no vintage without a watch, and nought left for the ſuſtenance of the huſbandman! That food ſhould be ſnatched from the mouths of thoſe who had earned it by toil, was grievous: the hope, however, of being afterwards relieved, might have made that grievance ſupportable; but it was neceſſary for every one who appeared at the anniverſary feſtival, to provide robes of various kinds, and gold and ſilver beſides. And "how [might one have ſaid] ſhall I "furniſh myſelf with thoſe things, oh ty-"rant void of underſtanding, if you carry "off the whole fruits of my ground, and "violently ſeize its expected produce?"

Thus,

Thus, throughout the dominions of Galerius, men were ſpoiled of their goods, and all was raked together into the imperial treaſury, that the Emperor might be enabled to perform his vow of celebrating a feſtival, which he was doomed never to celebrate.

Chap. XXXII.

MAXIMIN DAIA was incenſed at the nomination of Licinius to the dignity of *Emperor*, and he would no longer be called *Cæſar*, or allow himſelf to be ranked as third in authority. Galerius, by repeated meſſages, beſought Daia to yield, and to acquieſce in *his* arrangement, to give place to age, and to reverence the gray hairs of Licinius. But Daia became more and more inſolent; he urged, that as it was he who firſt aſſumed the purple, ſo, by poſſeſſion, he had right to priority in rank; and he ſet at nought the intreaties and the injunctions of Galerius.

That

That brute animal was ſtung to the quick, and bellowed, when the mean creature whom he had made *Cæſar* in expectation of his thorough obſequiouſneſs, forgot the great favour conferred on him, and impiouſly withſtood the requeſts and will of his benefactor. Galerius, at length, overcome by the obſtinacy of Daia, aboliſhed the ſubordinate title of *Cæſar*, gave to himſelf and Licinius that of *the Auguſti*, and to Daia and Conſtantine that of *ſons of the Auguſti*. Daia, ſome time after, in a letter to Galerius, took occaſion to obſerve, that at the laſt general muſter he had been ſaluted by his army under the title of *Auguſtus*. Galerius, vexed and grieved at this, commanded that all the four ſhould have the appellation of *Emperor*.

Chap. XXXIII.

And now, when Galerius was in the eighteenth year of his reign, God ſtruck him with

with an incurable plague. A malignant ulcer formed itſelf low down in his ſecret parts, and ſpread by degrees. The phyſicians attempted to eradicate it, and healed up the place affected. But the ſore, after having been ſkinned over, broke out again; a vein burſt, and the blood flowed in ſuch quantity as to endanger his life. The blood, however, was ſtopped, although with difficulty. The phyſicians had to undertake their operations anew, and at length they cicatriſed the wound. In conſequence of ſome ſlight motion of his body, Galerius received a hurt, and the blood ſtreamed more abundantly than before. He grew emaciated, pallid, and feeble, and the bleeding then ſtanched. The ulcer began to be inſenſible to the remedies applied, and a gangrene ſeized all the neighbouring parts. It diffuſed itſelf the wider the more the corrupted fleſh was cut away, and every thing employed as

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the means of cure, ſerved but to aggravate the diſeaſe.

" The maſters of the healing art withdrew."

Then famous phyſicians were brought in from all quarters; but no human means had any ſucceſs. Apollo and Æſculapius were beſought importunately for remedies: Apollo did preſcribe, and the diſtemper augmented. Already approaching to its deadly criſis, it had occupied the lower regions of his body; his bowels came out, and his whole ſeat putrified. The luckleſs phyſicians, although without hope of overcoming the malady, ceaſed not to apply fomentations, and adminiſter medicines. The humours having been repelled, the diſtemper attacked his inteſtines, and worms were generated in his body. The ſtench was ſo foul as to pervade not only the palace, but even the whole city: and no wonder; for by that time the

paſſages from his bladder and bowels, having been devoured by the worms, became indiſcriminate, and his body, with intolerable anguiſh, was diſſolved into one maſs of corruption.

" Stung to the ſoul, he bellowed with the pain,
" So roars the wounded bull." PITT.

They applied warm fleſh of animals to the chief ſeat of the diſeaſe, that the warmth might draw out thoſe minute worms; and accordingly, when the dreſſings were removed, there iſſued forth an innumerable ſwarm: nevertheleſs the prolific diſeaſe had hatched ſwarms much more abundant to prey upon and conſume his inteſtines. Already, through a complication of diſtempers, the different parts of his body had loſt their natural form; the ſuperior part was dry, meagre, and haggard, and his ghaſtly-looking ſkin had ſettled itſelf deep amongſt his bones, while the inferior, diſtended like bladders,

ders, retained no appearance of joints. Theſe things happened in the courſe of a complete year; and at length, overcome by calamities, he was obliged to acknowledge God, and he cried aloud in the intervals of raging pain, that he would re-edify the church which he had demoliſhed, and make atonement for his miſdeeds; and when he was near his end, he publiſhed an edict of the tenor following.

Chap. XXXIV.

" AMONGST our other regulations for " the permanent advantage of the common- " weal, we have hitherto ſtudied to reduce " all things to a conformity with the an- " cient laws and public diſcipline of the Ro- " mans.

" It has been our aim in an eſpecial man- " ner, that the Chriſtians alſo, who had " abandoned the religion of their forefa- " thers, ſhould return to right opinions.

" For such wilfulness and folly had, we
" know not how, taken possession of them,
" that instead of observing those ancient in-
" stitutions, which possibly their own fore-
" fathers had established, they, through ca-
" price, made laws to themselves, and drew
" together into different societies many men
" of widely different persuasions.

" After the publication of our edict, or-
" daining the Christians to betake themselves
" to the observance of the ancient institu-
" tions, many of them were subdued through
" the fear of danger, and moreover many
" of them were exposed to jeopardy: ne-
" vertheless because great numbers still per-
" sist in their opinions, and because we have
" perceived, that at present they neither
" pay reverence and due adoration to the
" gods, nor yet worship their own God,
" therefore we, from our wonted clemency
" in bestowing pardon on all, have judged
" it fit to extend our indulgence to those
" men,

" men, and to permit them again to be " Chriſtians, and to eſtabliſh the places of " their religious aſſemblies; yet ſo as that " they offend not againſt good order.

" By another mandate we purpoſe to ſig- " nify unto magiſtrates, how they ought " herein to demean themſelves.

" Wherefore it will be the duty of the " Chriſtians, in conſequence of this our to- " leration, to pray to their God for our " welfare, and for that of the public, and " for their own; that the commonweal may " continue ſafe in every quarter, and that " they themſelves may live ſecurely in their " habitations."

Chap. XXXV.

THIS edict was promulgated at Nicomedia on the day preceding the kalends of May, [30th of April], in the eighth conſulſhip of Galerius, and the ſecond of Maximin

min Daia. Then, the prison-gates having been thrown open, you, my best beloved Donatus, together with the other confessors for the faith, were set at liberty from a jail, which had been your residence for six years. Galerius, however, did not, by publication of this edict, obtain the divine forgiveness. In a few days after he was consumed by the horrible disease that had brought on an universal putrefaction. Dying, he recommended his wife and son to Licinius, and delivered them over into his hands. This event was known at Nicomedia before the end of the month, [May]. His vicennial anniversary was to have been celebrated on the ensuing kalends of March. [1st March following]

Chap. XXXVI.

Daia, on receiving this news, hasted with relays of horses from the east, to seize the dominions

dominions of Galerius, and, while Licinius lingered in Europe, to arrogate to himſelf all the country as far as the narrow ſeas of Chalcedon. On his entry into Bithynia, he, with the view of acquiring immediate popularity, aboliſhed Galerius's tax, to the great joy of all. Diſſenſion aroſe between the two Emperors, and almoſt an open war. They ſtood on the oppoſite ſhores with their armies. Peace, however, and amity were eſtabliſhed under certain conditions. Licinius and Daia met on the narrow ſeas, concluded a treaty, and, in token of friendſhip, joined hands. Then Daia, believing all things to be in ſecurity, returned [to Nicomedia], and was in his new dominions what he had been in Syria and Egypt. Firſt of all, he took away the toleration and general protection granted by Galerius to the Chriſtians, and, for this end, he ſecretly procured addreſſes from different cities, requeſting, that no Chriſtian church might be built within

their

their walls; and thus he meant to make that, which was his own choice, appear as if extorted from him by importunity. In compliance with thoſe addreſſes, he introduced a new mode of government in things reſpecting religion, and for each city he created a High Prieſt, choſen from among the perſons of moſt diſtinction. The office of thoſe men was to make daily ſacrifices to all their gods, and, with the aid of the former prieſts, to prevent the Chriſtians from erecting churches, or from worſhipping God either publicly or in private; and he authoriſed them to compel the Chriſtians to ſacrifice to idols, and, on their refuſal, to bring them before the civil magiſtrate; and, as if this had not been enough, in every province he eſtabliſhed a ſuperintendant prieſt, one of chief eminence in the ſtate; and he commanded, that all thoſe prieſts newly inſtituted ſhould appear in white habits, [that being the moſt honourable diſtinction of dreſs]. And as to the

the Chriſtians, he purpoſed to follow the courſe that he had followed in the eaſt, and affecting the ſhew of clemency, he forbade the ſlaying of God's ſervants, but he gave command that they ſhould be mutilated. So the confeſſors for the faith had their ears and noſtrils ſlit, their hands and feet lopped off, and their eyes dug out of the ſockets.

Chap. XXXVII.

WHILE occupied in this plan, he received letters from Conſtantine which deterred him from proceeding in its execution; ſo, for a time, he diſſembled his purpoſe; nevertheleſs, any Chriſtian that fell within his power was privily thrown into the ſea. Neither did he ceaſe from his cuſtom of ſacrificing every day in the palace. It was alſo an invention of his, to cauſe all animals uſed for food to be ſlaughtered, not by cooks, but by prieſts at the altars; ſo that nothing was ever ſer-

ved up, unleſs foretaſted, conſecrated, and ſprinkled with wine, according to the rites of Paganiſm; and whoever was invited to an entertainment muſt needs have returned from it impure and defiled. In all things elſe he reſembled his preceptor Galerius. For if aught chanced to have been left untouched by Diocles and Maximian, *that* did Daia greedily and ſhameleſsly carry off. And now the granaries of each individual were ſhut, and all warehouſes ſealed up, and taxes, not yet due, were levied by anticipation. Hence famine, from neglect of cultivation, and the prices of all things enhanced beyond meaſure. Herds and flocks were driven from their paſture for the daily ſacrifice. By gorging his ſoldiers with the fleſh of ſacrifices, he ſo corrupted them, that they diſdained their wonted pittance in corn, and wantonly threw it away. Meanwhile Daia recompenſed his body guards, who were very numerous, with coſtly raiment and gold medals,

medals, made donatives in ſilver to the common ſoldiers and recruits, and beſtowed every ſort of largeſs on the barbarians who ſerved in his army. As to grants of the property of living perſons, which he made to his favourites whenever they choſe to aſk what belonged to another, I know not whether the ſame thanks might not be due to him that are given to merciful robbers, who ſpoil without murdering.

Chap. XXXVIII.

But *that* which diſtinguiſhed his character, and in which he tranſcended all former Emperors, was his deſire of debauching women. What elſe can I call it but a blind and headſtrong paſſion? Yet ſuch epithets feebly expreſs my indignation in reciting his enormities. The magnitude of the guilt overpowers my tongue, and makes it unequal to its office. Eunuchs and pandars made ſearch

every where, and no ſooner was any comely face diſcovered, than huſbands and parents were obliged to withdraw. Matrons of quality and virgins were ſtripped of their robes, and all their limbs were inſpected, leſt any part ſhould be unworthy of the bed of the Emperor. Whenever a woman reſiſted, death, by drowning, was inflicted on her: as if, under the reign of this adulterer, chaſtity had been treaſon. Some men there were, who beholding the violation of wives whom, for virtue and fidelity, they affectionately loved, could not endure their anguiſh of mind, and ſo killed themſelves. While this monſter ruled, it was ſingular deformity alone which could ſhield the honour of any female from his ſavage deſires. At length he introduced a cuſtom, prohibiting marriage, unleſs with the imperial permiſſion; and he made this an inſtrument to ſerve the purpoſes of his lewdneſs. After having debauched free-born maidens, he gave them

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for wives to his ſlaves. His courtiers alſo imitated the example of the Emperor, and violated with impunity the beds of their dependants. For who was there to puniſh ſuch offences? As for the daughters of men of middle rank, any who were inclined took them by force. Ladies of quality, who could not be taken by force, were petitioned for, and obtained from the Emperor by way of free gift: nor could a father oppoſe this; for, the imperial warrant having been once ſigned, he had no alternative but to die, or to receive ſome barbarian as his ſon-in-law. For hardly was there any perſon in the life-guard except of thoſe people, who, having been driven from their habitations by the Goths in the twentieth year of Diocletian, yielded themſelves to Galerius, and entered into his ſervice. It was ill for humankind, that men, who had fled from the bondage of barbarians, ſhould thus come to lord it over the Romans. Environed by ſuch guards,

Daia

Daia oppreſſed and inſulted the eaſtern empire.

Chap. XXXIX.

Now Daia, in gratifying his libidinous deſires, made his own will the ſtandard of right; and therefore he would not refrain from ſoliciting the widow of Galerius, the Empreſs Valeria, to whom he had lately given the appellation of mother. After the death of her huſband ſhe had repaired to Daia, becauſe ſhe imagined that ſhe might live with more ſecurity in his dominions than elſewhere, eſpecially as he was a married man; but the flagitious creature became inſtantly inflamed with a paſſion for her. Valeria was ſtill in weeds, the time of her mourning not being yet expired. He ſent a meſſage to her, propoſing marriage, and offering, on her compliance, to put away his wife. She frankly returned an anſwer ſuch as

as ſhe alone could dare to do: firſt, that ſhe would not treat of marriage while ſhe was in weeds, and while the aſhes of Galerius, *her* huſband, and, by adoption, the father of Daia, were yet warm; next, that he acted impiouſly, in propoſing to divorce a faithful wife to make room for another, whom, in her turn, he would alſo caſt off; and, laſtly, that it was indecent, unexampled, and unlawful, for a woman of her title and dignity to engage a ſecond time in wedlock. This bold anſwer having been reported to Daia, preſently his deſires changed into rage and furious reſentment. He pronounced ſentence of forfeiture againſt the Princeſs, ſeized her goods, removed her attendants, tortured her eunuchs to death, and baniſhed her and her mother Priſca: but he appointed no particular place for her reſidence while in baniſhment; and hence he inſultingly expelled her from every abode that ſhe took in the courſe of her wanderings; and, to complete

complete all, he condemned the ladies who enjoyed moſt of her friendſhip and confidence, to die on a falſe accuſation of adultery.

Chap. XL.

THERE was a certain matron of high rank, who already had grandchildren by more than one ſon. Her Valeria loved like a ſecond mother, and Daia ſuſpected that her advice had produced that refuſal which Valeria gave to his matrimonial offers; and therefore he charged the Preſident Eratineus to have her put to death in a way that might injure her fame. To her two others, equally noble, were added. One of them who had a daughter, a veſtal virgin at Rome, maintained an intercourſe by ſtealth with the baniſhed Valeria. The other, married to a ſenator, was intimately connected with the Empreſs. Excellent beauty and virtue proved

proved the cauſe of their death. They were dragged to the tribunal, not of an upright judge, but of a robber. Neither indeed was there any accuſer, until a certain Jew, one charged with other offences, was induced, through hope of pardon, to give falſe evidence againſt the innocent. The equitable and vigilant magiſtrate conducted him out of the city under a guard, leſt the populace ſhould have ſtoned him. This tragedy was acted at Nicæa. The Jew was ordered to the torture till he ſhould ſpeak as he had been inſtructed, while the torturers by blows prevented the women from ſpeaking in their own defence. The innocent were condemned to die. Then there aroſe wailing and lamentation, not only of the ſenator, who attended on his well-deſerving conſort, but amongſt the ſpectators alſo, whom this proceeding, ſcandalous and unheard of, had brought together; and, to prevent the multitude from violently reſcuing the condemn-

ed perſons out of the hands of the executioners, military commanders followed with light infantry and archers. And thus, under a guard of armed ſoldiers, they were led to puniſhment. Their domeſtics having been forced to flee, they would have remained without burial, had not the compaſſion of friends interred them by ſtealth. Nor was the promiſe of pardon made good to the feigned adulterer; for he was fixed to a gibbet, and then he diſcloſed the whole ſecret contrivance; and, with his laſt breath, he proteſted to all the beholders, that the women died innocent.

Chap. XLI.

But the Empreſs, an exile in ſome deſert region of Syria, ſecretly informed her father Diocletian of the calamity that had befallen her. He deſpatched meſſengers to Daia, requeſting that his daughter might be ſent to him.

him. He could not prevail. Again and again he intreated; yet ſhe was not ſent. At length he employed a relation of his, a military man, high in power and authority, to implore Daia by the remembrance of paſt favours. This meſſenger, equally unſucceſsful in his negotiation as the others, reported to Diocletian, that his prayers were vain.

Chap. XLII.

At this time, by command of Conſtantine, the ſtatues of Maximian Herculius were thrown down, and his portraits removed; and as the two old Emperors were generally delineated in one piece, the portraits of both were removed at the ſame time. Thus Diocletian lived to ſee a diſgrace which no former Emperor had ever ſeen, and, under the double load of vexation of ſpirit and bodily maladies, he reſolved to die. Toſſing to and fro, with his ſoul agitated by grief, he could

neither eat nor take reſt. He ſighed, groaned, and wept often, and inceſſantly threw himſelf into various poſtures, now on his couch, and now on the ground. So he, who for twenty years was the moſt proſperous of Emperors, having been caſt down into the obſcurity of a private ſtation, treated in the moſt contumelious manner, and compelled to abhor life, become incapable of receiving nouriſhment, and, worn out with anguiſh of mind, expired.

Chap. XLIII.

Of the adverſaries of God there ſtill remained one, whoſe overthrow and end I am now to relate.

Daia had entertained jealouſy and ill-will againſt Licinius from the time that the preference was given to him by Galerius, and thoſe ſentiments ſtill ſubſiſted, notwithſtanding the treaty of peace lately concluded between

tween them. When Daia heard that the ſiſter of Conſtantine was betrothed to Licinius, he apprehended that the two Emperors, by contracting this affinity, meant to league againſt him; ſo he privily ſent ambaſſadors to Rome, deſiring a friendly alliance with Maxentius: he alſo wrote to him in terms of cordiality. The ambaſſadors were received courteouſly, friendſhip eſtabliſhed, and, in token of it, the effigies of Maxentius and Daia were placed together in public view. Maxentius willingly embraced this, as if it had been an aid from Heaven; for he had already declared war againſt Conſtantine, as if to revenge the death of his father Maximian. From this appearance of filial piety a ſuſpicion aroſe, that the deteſtable old man had but feigned a quarrel with his ſon, that he might have an opportunity to deſtroy his rivals in power, and ſo make way for himſelf and his ſon to poſſeſs the whole empire. This conjecture, however, had

had no foundation; for his true purpoſe was to have deſtroyed his ſon and the others, and then to have reinſtated himſelf and Diocletian in ſovereign authority.

Chap. XLIV.

And now a civil war broke out between Conſtantine and Maxentius. Although Maxentius kept himſelf within Rome, becauſe the ſoothſayers had foretold, that if he went out of it, he ſhould periſh, yet he conducted the military operations by able generals. In forces he exceeded his adverſary; for he had not only his father's army, which deſerted from Severus, but alſo his own, which he had lately drawn together out of Mauritania and Italy They fought, and the troops of Maxentius prevailed. At length Conſtantine, with ſteady courage, and a mind prepared for every event, led his whole forces to the neighbourhood of Rome, and encamped

ed them oppoſite to the Milvian bridge. The anniverſary of the reign of Maxentius approached, that is, the ſixth of the kalends of November, [27th October], and the fifth year of his reign was drawing to an end.

Conſtantine was directed in a dream, to cauſe *the heavenly ſign* to be delineated on the ſhields of his ſoldiers, and ſo to proceed to battle. He did as he had been commanded, and he marked on their ſhields the letter X, with a perpendicular line drawn through it, and turned round at the top, thus , being the cypher of CHRIST. Having this ſign, his troops ſtood to arms. The enemies advanced, but without their Emperor, and they croſſed the bridge. The armies met, and fought with the utmoſt exertions of valour, and firmly maintained their ground. In the mean time, a ſedition aroſe at Rome, and Maxentius was reviled as one who had abandoned all concern for the ſafety of the commonweal; and ſuddenly, while

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he exhibited the Circenſian games on the anniverſary of his reign, the people cried with one voice, "Conſtantine cannot be over-"come." Diſmayed at this, Maxentius burſt from the aſſembly, and having called ſome ſenators together, ordered the Sibylline books to be ſearched. In them it was found, that "on the ſame day the enemy of the Ro-"mans ſhould periſh." Led by this reſponſe to the hopes of victory, he went to the field. The bridge in his rear was broken down. At ſight of that the battle grew hotter. The hand of the Lord prevailed, and the forces of Maxentius were routed. He fled towards the broken bridge; but the multitude preſſing on him, he was driven headlong into the Tiber.

This deſtructive war being ended, Conſtantine was acknowledged as Emperor, with great rejoicings, by the ſenate and people of Rome. And now he came to know the perfidy of Daia; for he found the letters writ-

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ten to Maxentius, and saw the statues and portraits of the two associates which had been set up together. The senate, in reward of the valour of Constantine, decreed to him the title of *Maximus*, [the Greatest], a title which Daia had always arrogated to himself. Daia, when he heard that Constantine was victorious, and Rome freed, expressed as much sorrow as if he himself had been vanquished: but afterwards, when he heard of the decree of the senate, he grew outrageous, avowed enmity towards Constantine, and made his title of *the Greatest* a theme of abuse and raillery.

Chap. XLV.

Constantine having settled all things at Rome, went to Milan about the beginning of winter. Thither also Licinius came to receive his wife Constantia. When Daia understood that they were busied in solemni-

zing the nuptials, he moved out of Syria, in the depth of a ſevere winter, and by forced marches, he came into Bithynia with an army much impaired: for he loſt all his beaſts of burden, of whatever kind, in conſequence of exceſſive rains and ſnow, miry ways, cold, and fatigue. Their carcaſſes, ſcattered about the roads, ſeemed an emblem of the calamities of the impending war, and the preſage of a like deſtruction that awaited the ſoldiers. Daia did not halt in his own territories; but immediately croſſed the Thracian Boſphorus, and in a hoſtile manner approached the gates of Bizantium. There was a garriſon in the city eſtabliſhed by Licinius to check any invaſion that Daia might make. At firſt, Daia attempted to entice the ſoldiers by the promiſe of donatives, and then, to intimidate them by aſſault and ſtorm. Yet neither promiſes nor force availed aught. After eleven days had elapſed, within which time Licinius might have learned the ſtate of

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the garriſon, the ſoldiers ſurrendered, not through treachery, but becauſe they were too weak to make a longer reſiſtance. Then Daia moved on to Heraclea, [otherwiſe called Perinthus], and, by delays of the like nature before that place, loſt ſome days. And now Licinius, by expeditious marches, had reached Adrianople, but with forces not numerous. Then Daia, having taken Perinthus by capitulation, and remained there for a ſhort ſpace, moved forwards eighteen miles to the *firſt ſtation*. Here his progreſs was ſtopped; for Licinius had already occupied the *ſecond ſtation*, at the diſtance alſo of eighteen miles. Licinius, having aſſembled what forces he could from the neighbouring quarters, advanced towards Daia, rather indeed to retard his operations, than with any purpoſe of fighting, or hope of victory; for Daia had an army of ſeventy thouſand men, while he himſelf had ſcarce thirty thouſand; for his ſoldiers being diſ-

perſed in various regions, there was not time, on that ſudden emergency, to collect all of them together.

Chap. XLVI.

The armies thus approaching each other, ſeemed on the eve of a battle. Then Daia made this vow to Jupiter, that, if he obtained victory, he would extinguiſh, and utterly efface the name of the Chriſtians. And, on the following night, an angel of the Lord ſeemed to ſtand before Licinius while he was aſleep, admoniſhing him to ariſe immediately, and, with his whole army, to put up a prayer to the ſupreme God, and aſſuring him, that by ſo doing he ſhould obtain victory. Licinius fancied that, hearing this, he aroſe, and that his monitor, who was nigh him, directed how he ſhould pray, and in what words. Awaking from ſleep, he ſent for one of his ſecretaries, and dictated

theſe

theſe words exactly as he had heard them. " Supreme God, we beſeech thee; Holy " God, we beſeech thee; unto thee we com- " mend all right, unto thee we commend " our ſafety, unto thee we commend our " empire. By thee we live, by thee we are " victorious and happy. Supreme Holy God, " hear our prayers; to thee we ſtretch forth " our arms. Hear, Holy Supreme God." Many copies were made of theſe words, and diſtributed amongſt the principal commanders, who were to teach them to the ſoldiers under their charge. At this all men took freſh courage, in the confidence that victory had been announced to them from heaven. Licinius reſolved to give battle on the kalends of May, [1ſt May]; for preciſely eight years before, Daia had received the dignity of *Cæſar*, and Licinius choſe that day, in hopes that Daia might be vanquiſhed on the anniverſary of *his* reign, as Maxentius had been on *his*. Daia, however, purpoſed to give

give battle earlier, to fight on the day before those kalends, [30th April], and to triumph on the anniversary of his reign. Accounts came that Daia was in motion; the soldiers of Licinius armed themselves, and advanced. A barren and open plain, called *Campus Serenus*, lay between the two armies. They were now in sight of one another. The soldiers of Licinius placed their shields on the ground, took off their helmets, and, following the example of their leaders, stretched forth their hands towards heaven. Then the Emperor uttered the prayer, and they all repeated it after him. The host, doomed to speedy destruction, heard the murmur of the prayers of their adversaries. And now, the ceremony having been thrice performed, the soldiers of Licinius became full of courage, buckled on their helmets again, and resumed their shields. The two Emperors advanced to a conference; but Daia could not be brought to peace; for he held

Licinius

Licinius in contempt, and imagined that the ſoldiers would preſently abandon an Emperor parſimonious in his donatives, and enter into the ſervice of one liberal even to profuſion. And indeed it was on this notion that he began the war. He looked for the voluntary ſurrender of the armies of Licinius; and, thus reinforced, he meant forthwith to have attacked Conſtantine.

Chap. XLVII.

So the two armies drew nigh; the trumpets gave the ſignal; the military enſigns advanced; the troops of Licinius charged. But the enemies, panic-ſtruck, could neither draw their ſwords, nor yet throw their javelins. Daia went about, and, alternately by intreaties and promiſes, attempted to ſeduce the ſoldiers of Licinius. But he was not hearkened to in any quarter, and they drove him back. Then were the troops of Daia

ſlaughtered,

ſlaughtered, none making reſiſtance; and ſuch numerous legions, and forces ſo mighty, were mowed down by an inferior enemy. No one called to mind his reputation, or former valour, or the honourable rewards which had been conferred on him. The ſupreme God did ſo place their necks under the ſword of their foes, that they ſeemed to have entered the field, not as combatants, but as men devoted to death. After great numbers had fallen, Daia perceived that every thing went contrary to his hopes; and therefore he threw aſide the purple, and having put on the habit of a ſlave, haſted croſs the Thracian Boſphorus. One half of his army periſhed in battle, and the reſt either ſurrendered to the victor or fled; for now that the Emperor himſelf had deſerted, there ſeemed to be no ſhame in deſertion. Before the expiration of the kalends of May, Daia arrived at Nicomedia, although diſtant one hundred and ſixty miles from the field of battle.

battle. So in the ſpace of one day and two nights he performed that journey. Having hurried away with his children and wife, and a few officers of his court, he went towards Syria; but having been joined by ſome troops from thoſe quarters, and having collected together a part of his fugitive forces, he halted in Cappadocia, and then he reſumed the imperial garb.

Chap. XLVIII.

Not many days after the victory, Licinius having received part of the ſoldiers of Daia into his ſervice, and properly diſtributed them, tranſported his army into Bithynia, and having made his entry into Nicomedia, he returned thanks to God, through whoſe aid he had overcome; and on the ides of June, [13th June], while he and Conſtantine were conſuls for the third time, he commanded the following edict for the reſtora-

tion of the church, directed to the president of the province, to be promulgated.

" When we, Constantine and Licinius, " Emperors, had an interview at Milan, and " conferred together with respect to the " good and security of the commonweal, it " seemed to us, that amongst those things " that are profitable to mankind in general, " the reverence paid to the Divinity merited " our first and chief attention, and that it " was proper that the Christians, and all " others, should have liberty to follow that " mode of religion which to each of them " appeared best; so that that God, who is " seated in heaven, might be benign and " propitious to us, and to every one under " our government; and therefore we jud- " ged it a salutary measure, and one highly " consonant to right reason, that no man " should be denied leave of attaching him- " self to the rites of the Christians, or to

" whatever

" whatever other religion his mind directed
" him, that thus the Supreme Divinity, to
" whose worship we freely devote ourselves,
" might continue to vouchsafe his favour
" and beneficence to us. And accordingly
" we give you to know, that without re-
" gard to any provisos in our former or-
" ders to you concerning the Christians, all
" who chuse that religion are to be permit-
" ted, freely and absolutely, to remain in it,
" and not to be disturbed any ways, or mo-
" lested. And we thought fit to be thus spe-
" cial in the things committed to your
" charge, that you might understand, that
" the indulgence which we have granted in
" matters of religion to the Christians is
" ample and unconditional, and perceive,
" at the same time, that the open and free
" exercise of their respective religions is
" granted to all others, as well as to the
" Christians: for it befits the well-ordered
" state and the tranquillity of our times, that

 " each

" each individual be allowed, according to
" his own choice, to worſhip the Divinity;
" and we mean not to derogate aught from
" the honour due to any religion or its vo-
" taries. Moreover, with reſpect to the Chri-
" ſtians, we formerly gave certain orders
" concerning the places appropriated for
" their religious aſſemblies; but now we will,
" that all perſons who have purchaſed ſuch
" places, either from our exchequer, or
" from any one elſe, do reſtore them to the
" Chriſtians, without money demanded or
" price claimed, and that this be performed
" peremptorily and unambiguouſly; and we
" will alſo, that they who have obtained any
" right to ſuch places by form of gift, do
" forthwith reſtore them to the Chriſtians:
" reſerving always to ſuch perſons, who
" have either purchaſed for a price, or gra-
" tuitouſly acquired them, to make applica-
" tion to the judge of the diſtrict, if they
" look on themſelves as intitled to any equi-
" valent

" valent from our beneficence.—All thoſe
" places are, by your intervention, to be
" immediately reſtored to the Chriſtians.
" And becauſe it appears, that beſides the
" places appropriated to religious worſhip,
" the Chriſtians did poſſeſs other places,
" which belonged not to individuals, but to
" their ſociety in general, that is, to their
" churches, we comprehend all ſuch within
" the regulation aforeſaid, and we will that
" you cauſe them all to be reſtored to the
" ſociety or churches, and *that* without he-
" ſitation or controverſy; provided always,
" that the perſons making reſtitution with-
" out a price paid, ſhall be at liberty to ſeek
" indemnification from our bounty. In fur-
" thering all which things for the behoof of
" the Chriſtians, you are to uſe your utmoſt
" diligence, to the end that our orders be
" ſpeedily obeyed, and our gracious purpoſe
" in ſecuring the public tranquillity promo-
" ted. So ſhall that divine favour which,

" in

" in affairs of the mightieſt importance, we " have already experienced, continue to give " ſucceſs to us, and, in our ſucceſſes, make " the commonweal happy. And that the " tenor of this our gracious ordinance may " be made known unto all, we will that you " cauſe it, by your authority, to be publiſh- " ed every where."

Licinius having iſſued this ordinance, made an harangue, in which he exhorted the Chriſtians to rebuild their religious edifices.

And thus, from the overthrow of the church until its reſtoration, there was a ſpace of ten years and about four months.

Chap. XLIX.

WHILE Licinius purſued with his army, the fugitive tyrant retreated, and again occupied the paſſes of Mount Taurus; and there, by erecting parapets and towers, attempted

tempted to ſtop the march of Licinius. But the victorious troops, by an attack made on the right, broke through all obſtacles, and Daia at length fled to Tarſus. *There*, being hard preſſed both by ſea and land, he deſpaired of finding any place for refuge; and, in the anguiſh and diſmay of his mind, he ſought death as the only remedy of thoſe calamities that God had heaped on him. But firſt he gorged himſelf with food, and large draughts of wine, as thoſe are wont who believe that they eat and drink for the laſt time; and ſo he ſwallowed poiſon. However, the force of the poiſon, repelled by his full ſtomach, could not immediately operate, but it produced a grievous diſeaſe reſembling the peſtilence; and his life was prolonged only that his ſufferings might be more ſevere. And now the poiſon began to rage, and to burn up every thing within him, ſo that he was driven to diſtraction with the intolerable pain; and during a fit

of

of phrenzy, which laſted four days, he gathered handfuls of earth, and greedily devoured it. Having undergone various and excruciating torments, he daſhed his forehead againſt the wall, and his eyes ſtarted out of their ſockets. And now, become blind, he imagined that he ſaw God, with his ſervants arrayed in white robes, ſitting in judgement on him. He roared out as men on the rack are wont, and exclaimed, that not he, but others were guilty. In the end, as if he had been racked into confeſſion, he acknowledged his own guilt, and lamentably implored Chriſt to have mercy upon him. Then amidſt groans, like thoſe of one burnt alive, did he breath out his guilty ſoul in the moſt horrible kind of death.

Chap. L.

THUS did God ſubdue all thoſe who perſecuted his name, ſo that neither root nor branch

branch of them remained: for Licinius, as ſoon as he was eſtabliſhed in ſovereign authority, commanded that Valeria ſhould be put to death. Daia, although exaſperated againſt her, never ventured to do this, not even after his diſcomfiture and flight, and when he knew that his end approached. Licinius commanded that Candidianus alſo ſhould be put to death. He was the ſon of Galerius by a concubine, and Valeria, having no children, had adopted him. On the news of the death of Daia, ſhe came in diſguiſe to the court of Licinius, anxious to obſerve what might befal Candidianus. The youth, preſenting himſelf at Nicomedia, had an outward ſhew of honour paid to him, and, while he ſuſpected no harm, was killed. Hearing of this cataſtrophe, Valeria immediately fled. The Emperor Severus left a ſon, Severianus, arrived at man's eſtate, who accompanied Daia in his flight from the field of battle. Licinius cauſed him to be con-

demned and executed, under the pretence, that, on the death of Daia, he had intentions of assuming the imperial purple. Long before this time, Candidianus and Severianus, apprehending evil from Licinius, had chosen to remain with Daia; while Valeria favoured Licinius, and was willing to bestow on him, that which she had denied to Daia, all rights accruing to her as the widow of Galerius. Licinius also put to death Maximus, the son of Daia, a boy eight years old, and a daughter of Daia, who was seven years old, and had been betrothed to Candidianus. But before their death, their mother had been thrown into the Orontes, in which river she herself had frequently commanded chaste women to be drowned. So, by the unerring and just judgement of God, all the impious received according to the deeds that they had done.

Chap.

Chap. LI.

VALERIA too, who for fifteen months had wandered under a mean garb from province to province, was at length diſcovered in Theſſalonica, was apprehended, together with her mother Priſca, and ſuffered capital puniſhment. Both the ladies were conducted to execution: A fall from grandeur which moved the pity of the multitude of beholders that the ſtrange ſight had gathered together! They were beheaded, and their bodies caſt into the ſea. Thus the chaſte demeanor of Valeria, and the high rank of her and her mother, proved fatal to both of them.

Chap. LII.

I RELATE all thoſe things on the authority of well-informed perſons, and I thought

it proper to commit them to writing exactly as they happened, leſt the memory of events ſo important ſhould periſh, and leſt any future Hiſtorian of the Perſecutors ſhould corrupt the truth, either by ſuppreſſing their offences againſt God, or the judgement of God againſt them. To his everlaſting mercy ought we to render thanks, that, having at length looked on the earth, he deigned to collect again and to reſtore his flock, partly laid waſte by ravenous wolves, and partly ſcattered abroad, and to extirpate thoſe noxious wild beaſts who had trod down its paſtures, and deſtroyed its reſting places. Where now are the ſurnames of the *Jovii* and the *Herculii*, once ſo glorious and renowned amongſt the nations; ſurnames inſolently aſſumed at firſt by Diocles and Maximian, and afterwards transferred to their ſucceſſors! The Lord has blotted them out, and eraſed them from the earth. Let us, therefore, with exultation celebrate the

triumphs

triumphs of God, and often times with praiſes make mention of his victory: let us in our prayers, by night and by day, beſeech him to confirm for ever that peace, which, after a warfare of ten years, he has beſtowed on his own; and do you above all others, my beſt-beloved Donatus, who ſo well deſerve to be heard, implore the Lord, that it would pleaſe him propitiouſly and mercifully to continue his pity towards his ſervants, to protect his people from the machinations and aſſaults of the devil, and to guard the now flouriſhing churches in perpetual felicity.

Notes and Illustrations.

Chap. I.

P. 1. l. 7. "All the adverſaries are de-"ſtroyed." It is generally ſuppoſed that the MS. has, "ecce *addetur* his omnibus adver-"ſarius;" but in the engraven *fac ſimile*, which Lenglet du Freſnoy publiſhed, *Lactant. Oper.* ii. 179. there is nothing that can be read "addetur." It has "addæ," very plainly written, and the reſt muſt be ſupplied by imagination. "Adverſarius" is not *there*. The word is "adverſarus," which, more probably, means "adverſariis" than "adverſarius." The ſuppoſed word "ad-"detur" is unintelligible; and hence various emendations have been propoſed. "Arce-"tur," *Boherell.* "Deditur," or "tradi-"tur," *Tollius.* "Abditur," *Bauldri*; who fancies

fancies that Lactantius alludes to *Revel.* c. xx. v. 1.—3. " Adteritur," *Coteler* and *Toinard.* " Excidetur," *Gale.* An anonymous critic, in the *Miscellaneous Observations* of Jortin, reads, " Ecce autem deletis omnibus adver- " sariis." And I have been advised to follow that emendation. Perhaps " ecce *adac-* " *tis* [brought under] omnibus adversariis," may be considered as no improbable reading.

P. 1. l. 11. " The temple of God, formerly overthrown." This seems to allude, in its primary sense at least, to the destruction of the church at Nicomedia, related in c. xii. *d. M. P.*; but possibly it may have a reference also to the body of the Christian people, termed metaphorically " the temple of God."

P. 1. l. 13. " God has raised up princes." This treatise was written before autumn 314, and while Licinius remained in amity with Constantine, and affected to favour the Christians.

P. 2. l. 21. " With fit vengeance," read, " With

" With late, indeed, but ſuitable ſeverity." The MS. has [ſervit [l. ſerius] quidem, ſed graviter et dignè.] Le Nourry reſtored thoſe words which Baluze had overlooked, and which, of conſequence, all the editors who copied from him omitted. The words are of great moment; becauſe Lactantius, *Inſtit.* i. 1. delivers the very ſame opinion, in words not diſſimilar. " Nam malis qui adhuc ad-" verſus juſtos in aliis terrarum partibus fæ-" viunt, quanto *ſerius*, tanto vehementius, " idem Omnipotens mercedem ſceleris exſol-" vet." This may be added to the numerous coincidencies of thought and expreſſion which attentive readers have diſcerned in Lactantius, and the author *d. M. P.*

Chap. II.

P. 3. l. 17. " I find it written." This opinion was entertained by many of the ancient Chriſtians, and particularly it is mentioned by Tertullian, from whom Lactantius might have taken it. Lactantius, *Inſt.* iv. 10.

ſays the ſame thing; and he juſtly obſerves, that the *Gemini* were conſuls in the 15th year of Tiberius.

Knowing this, he might have ſeen that he aſſigned a wrong year for the crucifixion of Chriſt. It is ſaid, *Luke*, iii. 1. that John the Baptiſt began to preach in the 15th year of Tiberius; and it is impoſſible that Chriſt could have been crucified at the time of the celebration of the paſſover in that year. The preaching, impriſonment, and death of John the Baptiſt, and all the events attending the miniſtry of Chriſt, could not have happened within a ſpace of three months.

P. 4. l. 10. "A whirlwind." [*procella* nubis.] To the ſame purpoſe, *Inſtit.* iv. 22. "Circumfudit ſe *repentè* nubes." This, as has been remarked by the critics, is not altogether the language of Scripture. See *Mark*, xvi. 19.; *Luke*, xxiv. 51.; *Acts*, i. 9.

P. 4. l. 14. "Matthias and Paul." This is incorrect; for Paul was not choſen by the eleven,

eleven, nor did he come in the place of Judas Iſcariot.

P. 5. l. 1. " While Nero reigned." Until the diſcovery of the MS. *d. M. P.* it was aſſerted by the Roman-Catholic writers, that Peter ſat for twenty-five years in the ſee of Rome. The words of Baronius, in particular, are: " Omnium teſtimonio *certum ex-* " *ploratumque* habetur, jam anno ſecundo " Claudii Auguſti Petrum, Apoſtolorum " Principem, veniſſe Romam." The treatiſe *d. M. P.* has contributed to detect many vulgar errors. The later Roman-Catholic writers, well pleaſed at having obtained an additional and ancient teſtimony of Peter having been at Rome, ſeem willing that his long reſidence in that city ſhould be controverted without any impeachment of the faith.

P. 5. l. 6. " When Nero heard of thoſe " things." Every one knows that Tacitus aſcribes the perſecution of the Chriſtians to the wicked policy of Nero, after the burning

of Rome. Suetonius mentions the perſecution, but does not connect it with the fire; and Dion Caſſius, as we have him in his abridger Xiphiline, mentions the fire, but ſays nothing of the perſecution: ſo that we ought to have recourſe to the teſtimony of Tacitus, as the fulleſt and moſt diſtinct of any.

Nero might have had various reaſons for deſtroying the Chriſtians, and there is nothing impoſſible in what Lactantius relates; yet his ſtory has much the air of a popular concluſion raſhly drawn from the circumſtance of unmerited perſecution. For Nero, although he had heard of the miracles of Peter, would never have diſcloſed to the world, that he perſecuted the Chriſtians on account of thoſe miracles.

Here it may be fit to make an obſervation on the teſtimony of Tacitus. He ſays, that there was a *huge multitude* of Chriſtians condemned by Nero. [Multitudo ingens.] Tacitus has been ſuppoſed an hiſtorian to whom credit

credit might be given with reſpect to Roman affairs, and tranſactions in the capital of the empire. But, *ſtat ſua cuique dies*; every author has his day of celebrity and credit: for we have been lately told, "That we "ſhould interpret with *candid allowance* the "*vague expreſſions* of Tacitus, when he *ex-* "*aggerates the crowds of deluded fanatics*, "who had forſaken the eſtabliſhed worſhip "of the gods." *Gibbon*, i. 608. It ſeems that the expreſſions in Tacitus are *vague*; and I acknowledge that he has not given a liſt of caſualties, mentioning, after the form of a weekly regiſter, that ſo many Chriſtians were torn in pieces, ſo many crucified, and ſo many burnt alive; but he has ſaid, "That "when day failed, they were burnt to ſerve "as lamps during the darkneſs of night." [Ut ubi defeciſſet dies, in uſum nocturni luminis urerentur.] This, I preſume, implies, that the day ſufficed not for the execution of the Chriſtians, and that their flaming bodies afforded

afforded decent illuminations to the capital during the obscurity of night.

The reason assigned for interpreting the *vague expressions* and *exaggerations* of Tacitus with *candid allowance*, is exceedingly singular. " Livy says, xxxix. 13. 15. 16. 17. " That after the Bacchanals had awakened " the severity of the senate, it was likewise " apprehended, that a very great multitude, " as it were *another people*, had been initiated into those abhorred mysteries. A " more careful inquiry *soon* demonstrated, " that the offenders did not exceed *seven* " *thousand*." It is not obvious what connection this has with the *multitudo ingens* of Christians that suffered under Nero. At the first discovery of the Bacchanals, the public apprehensions might have exaggerated the number of the initiated; but surely there was sufficient time between the reign of Nero and the period at which Tacitus wrote, to learn with certainty whether few or many

Christians

Chriſtians had been put to death by Nero, even although the Romans ſhould be ſuppoſed to have been incapable of diſcerning, at the moment of the execution, whether few or many were executed.

Mr Gibbon will not admit that Tacitus knew the vulgar denomination of the men who ſuffered. According to the Roman hiſtorian, they were called *Chriſtians*; but according to the Engliſh, *Galileans*; neither will he admit, that the aſſertion of Tacitus reſpecting their great number ought to be credited. All then that remains is, that in in the next edition of Tacitus we ſhould read "Galilæorum nonnulli," inſtead of "Chri-" ſtianorum multitudo ingens."

P. 5. l. 16. "He *ſlew* Paul" [Interfecit.] It is plain that Lactantius meant to diſtinguiſh the manner in which Paul died from the manner in which Peter died; and therefore either the word *gladio* has been omitted by the tranſcriber, or the word *interfecit*

terfecit implies, that Nero cauſed Paul to be ſlain with a ſword, or to be beheaded. Paul, a freeman and a Roman citizen, was on every occaſion honourably tenacious of the rights of his *ſtate*; and I ſuppoſe, that, even at the laſt awful moment, he claimed his privilege of dying like a freeman and a Roman citizen. But let it be remembered, once for all, that I pretend not to obtrude any remark on my readers. They may account in ſome other manner for the general tradition as to the mode of Paul's death, or they may diſregard that tradition altogether.

P. 5. l. 20. " Suddenly diſappeared." [Nuſquam repentè comparuit.] Tollius beſtows a note on this paſſage to the following effect. " All pure fictions! Indeed I won-
" der how the ancient Chriſtians got into
" the practice of *lying* ſo egregiouſly. Were
" I diſpoſed to draw up a catalogue of *their*
" *lies*, they would be enough to load whole
" waggons; a fit preſent, in company with
" the

" the Sibylline oracles, for doating old wo-
" men."

Amongſt the *egregious lies* of the ancient Chriſtians, Tollius ranks a vulgar report which prevailed over the Roman empire, " That Nero was not dead, but would make " his appearance again, and reſume the ſove-" reignty." Tacitus, *Hiſt.* ii. 3. ſays, " A-" chaia atque Aſia falſo metu exterritæ, ve-" lut Nero adventaret, vario ſuper exitu " ejus rumore, *eoque* pluribus eum vivere " fingentibus credentibuſque." This happened, as may be learned from the context, about eight months after the death of Nero. The hiſtorian ſuppoſes the report to have ariſen from the various and contradictory accounts of the circumſtances attending that event; and indeed it was natural enough for men to imagine Nero ſtill alive, ſince the ſtories of his death were inconſiſtent. And this notion took ſo deep root, that although the funerals of Nero were publicly perform-

ed, and a monument erected for him in Rome, yet ſtill he was believed by ſome to be alive. For Suetonius thus ſpeaks: "Et "tamen non defuerunt qui per longum "tempus vernis æſtiviſque floribus tumu- "lum ejus ornarent, ac modò imagines præ- "textatas in roſtris præferrent, modò edicta "quaſi viventis, ac, brevi, magno inimico- "rum malo, reverſuri." *Nero*, c. 50. Tacitus mentions a baſe fellow, reſembling Nero in his countenance, who gave himſelf out to be that Emperor; and Suetonius informs us, that, after twenty years had elapſed from the death of Nero, an impoſtor appeared under his name, and was favourably received amongſt the Parthians.

They who had ſeen the cruelties of the Emperor Nero might dread that he was ſtill alive, and they who foreſaw the conſequences of the extinction of the imperial family, might flatter themſelves with the fond hopes of the return of an hereditary ſovereign.

Of

Of this there are many examples in hiſtory. Hence impoſtors, under the name of Richard II. and of Richard Plantagenet Duke of York, found credit in England; and hence a falſe King Sebaſtian appeared on the Continent.

There is no reaſon to ſuppoſe that the ancient Chriſtians invented the fiction of Nero being alive; and ſurely Lactantius, in particular, ought not to be charged with what he explodes as an abſurdity.

P. 6. l. 4. "The Sibylline verſes." The verſes to which Lactantius is thought to allude, are miſerably corrupted, and, in part, unintelligible. They begin thus: Ἥξει δ' ἐκ περάων γαίης μιξοκτόνος.—Gale conjectures that they were originally intended to deſcribe Julius Cæſar.

The concluſion of this chapter is mutilated in the MS.; ſo that the ſenſe given to it in the tranſlation muſt be conſidered merely as a probable conjecture.

Chap. III.

P. 7. l. 5. " Until he ſtretched forth his " impious hands," &c. Juvenal remarks, *Satyr.* iv. *ad fin.* that Domitian ſhed the moſt honourable blood in Rome with impunity, and that he was not cut off until he became formidable to the meaner ſort.

" Atque utinam his potius nugis ſola illa dediſſet
" Tempora ſævitiæ, claras quibus abſtulit urbi
" Illuſtreſque animas impune, et vindice nullo.
" *Sed periit, poſtquam cerdonibus eſſe timendus*
" *Cœperat.* Hoc nocuit Lamiarum cæde madenti."

It is probable that Juvenal and Lactantius allude to the ſame hiſtorical circumſtance; but it does not appear what authority Juvenal had for ſaying, that the aſſaſſins of Domitian avenged on him the injuries done to the meaner ſort.

P. 7. l. 12. " The memory of his name " was eraſed." [Etiam memoria nominis ejus *eraſa* eſt.] The ſenate iſſued a decree againſt

againſt Domitian to this effect: *Eradendos ubique titulos, abolendamque omnem memoriam.* See *Sueton.* Domit. c. 23. Pagi. *ad an. Chriſti* 88. has publiſhed an inſcription originally ſet up in honour of Domitian, but mutilated and defaced, according to the decree of the ſenate.

P. 8. l. 6. "The church ſuffered no vio-"lent aſſaults from her enemies." [Nullos inimicorum impetus paſſa.] If Lactantius meant, that the Chriſtians remained in uninterrupted tranquillity during all that ſpace, he was exceedingly miſinformed; for there are undoubted evidences to the contrary, of Pagan as well as of Chriſtian writers. It is probable that he meant to aſſert, that from the death of Domitian until the acceſſion of Decius, there had been no *general* aſſault againſt the Chriſtians, or *univerſal* perſecution, authoriſed by edicts throughout the empire.

A critic, in *Journal Literaire*, v. 7. part 1. p. 23.

p. 23. gives a different turn to the expreſſion, thus: "Dans les tems qui ont ſuivi le "regne de Domitien, il y a eu pluſieurs "bons Princes, qui ont gouverné l'Empire "Romain, du tems deſquels l'Egliſe, qui ne "fut point alors exposée aux inſultes de "ſes ennemis, s'etendit par toute la terre."

Chap. IV.

P. 8. l. 18. "Decius." See *Remains of Chriſtian Antiquity*, vol. 2. p 13.—23. and the Notes.

Chap. V.

P. 9. l. 20. "The adverſaries of Heaven "always," &c. [Adverſarios Dei *ſemper* dignam ſcelere recipere mercedem.] According to Baluze and Le Nourry, the reading in the MS. is *ſæpe*; but Lenglet du Freſnoy aſſerts that it is *ſemper*. When eye-witneſſes diſagree, *who* is there that can decide? I ſhould be inclined to prefer *ſæpe*, becauſe this reading is moſt agreeable to hiſtorical truth; and to the ſame purpoſe Lactantius

tantius expreſſes himſelf, *Inſtit.* v. 24. "Sed "idem, quamvis populi ſui vexationes *et* "*hic in præſenti ſoleat* vindicare, tamen ju- "bet nos expectare patienter illum cœleſtis "judicii diem, quo ipſe pro ſuis quemque "meritis aut honoret, aut puniat."

Chap. VI.

P. 12. l. 2. The character of Aurelian, as drawn by his profeſſed panegyriſt Vopiſcus, fully juſtifies whatever Lactantius has ſaid concerning that Emperor.

Chap. VII.

P. 16. l. 11. "But this was peculiar to "him, that whenever he ſaw a field," &c. [Sed in hoc illud fuit præcipuum, quod ubicunque cultiorem agrum viderat, aut ornatius ædificium, jam parata domino calumnia et pœna capitalis.] Thus tranſlated by Mr Gibbon, i. 458. "The poſſeſſion of an ele- "gant villa, or a well-cultivated eſtate, was "interpreted as a convincing evidence of "guilt." By ſome ſtrange miſtake, the tranſlation

tranſlation imputes *that* injuſtice and cruelty to Herculius, which the original imputes to Diocletian.

Chap. VIII.

P. 18. l. 4. "In debauching males." [Ad corrumpendos *mares*, quod eſt odioſum ac deteſtabile, verùm etiam ad violandas primorum filias.] The MS. has *mores*. Archdeacon Battely appears to have been the firſt who ſuggeſted this emendation: Biſhop Burnet adopted it, and it is approved by Græ-vius and other critics. But Le Nourry is ſeriouſly ſcandaliſed at it, and ſays, "Mira-"mur quomodo illa fictitia Ceciliani textûs "emendatio, vel potius depravatio, in eo-"rum, *quorum mores penitus corrupti non* "*ſunt*, mentem venire potuerit." p. 281. So that it ſhould ſeem, by this lamentable piece of Latin, that nothing but extreme depravity of manners could have induced any man to read *mares* inſtead of *mores*.

Nevertheleſs the emendation appears fit and

and neceſſary. For to ſay that *corrumpere mores* is *odioſum et deteſtabile*, is to beſtow the ſevereſt epithets on an indefinite offence; and the reading "ad corrumpendos *mares*— "verùm etiam," &c. does not imply that Lactantius ſpake ſlightly of the former crime, but that he conſidered the latter crime as more outrageous; as the Emperor Julian repreſents Herculius to have been τὰ εἰς ἀφροδίτην ΠΑΝΤΟΙΩΣ ἀσελγής. *Cæſar*. There may be a further ſenſe in the word *violatas*, which the hiſtorian has decently veiled.

Chap. IX.

P. 19. l. 20. "Apt to be low-ſpirited and "timorous in every commotion." [In omni tumultu meticuloſus et animi dejectus.] Mr Gibbon obſerves, i. 424. that "*the ma-* "*lice of religious zeal* has affected to caſt "ſuſpicions on the *perſonal courage* of Dio- "cletian. It would not be eaſy to perſuade "us of the cowardice of a ſoldier of for- "tune." And he adds in a note, "Lac-

" tantius accuſes him of timidity in two pla-
" ces," c. 7. & 8.; and in c. 9. he ſays of him, " Erat in omni tumultu," &c. To the ſame purpoſe, Tollius ſays, *ad. c.* 10. " Mihi ſanè a timore alieniſſimus fuiſſe vide-
" tur Diocletianus, qui ſe *virtute ſuâ* ad ip-
" ſum ſummi imperii faſtigium admovit."

Notwithſtanding ſuch poſitive opinions, it ſhould ſeem that *both* authors have miſtaken the ſenſe of Lactantius; and it is certain that Heathen hiſtorians, who could have nothing of *the malice of religious zeal* againſt Diocletian, ſpeak of him as Lactantius does.

Granting cowardice to be inconſiſtent with the character of a ſoldier of fortune, which is not altogether certain, and granting Diocletian to have obtained the empire by his valour, [virtute ſuâ], which is hardly probable, yet the inference drawn from thoſe propoſitions, to the diſcredit of Lactantius, appears erroneous.

Lactantius never charges Diocletian with

want

want of perſonal courage. In c. 7. he ſays, that Diocletian " orbem terræ — *timiditate* " ſubvertit, tres *enim* participes regni ſui fe- " cit." *Here* he aſcribes the overthrow of the ancient ſyſtem, and the diviſion of the imperial dignity, to the *timiditas* of Diocletian, that is, to his apprehenſions of the inſecure ſtate of a ſingle Emperor. This is well expreſſed by Monteſquieu. " To pre- " vent the continual treaſons of the ſoldiery " —he ordered that there ſhould always be " two Emperors and two Cæſars. He jud- " ged that the principal armies, being in the " hands of thoſe who ſhared the empire, " would check and intimidate each other, " and that the other armies, not being " ſtrong enough to make an Emperor of " their own chuſing, would loſe by ſlow de- " grees the cuſtom of electing," &c. Tranſlated by *Jortin.* Remarks on Eccleſ. Hiſt. ii. 261. 262.

A plan, formed in conſequence of *ratio-*

nal apprehenſions may be termed *timid:* but this impeaches not the *perſonal courage* of Diocletian, or charges him with *cowardice.*

In c. 8. Lactantius ſays, that Diocletian had *plus timiditatis* than his intrepid colleague Herculius. This only implies, that, comparatively ſpeaking, Diocletian was more cautious and circumſpect than Herculius, a man of a character altogether military, and ignorant of thoſe arts of civil life in which Diocletian excelled.

To the ſame purpoſe alſo is the expreſſion in Lactantius, c. 9. that Diocletian was "in "omni tumultu meticuloſus." He judged of future events by the paſt; he had ſeen Probus murdered by ſoldiers who loved him, and Aurelian by his familiar friends; he knew the fate of the ſons of his maſter Carus; and therefore, like a ſagacious politician, he feared when there was cauſe for fear.

Lactantius adds, but which has been overlooked by Mr Gibbon, that Diocletian "e-

"rat

" rat *præ timore* ſcrutator rerum futura-
" rum," c. 10. This certainly does not imply any defect in perſonal courage; for the baſeſt and moſt ſuperſtitious dread of future events may prevail in the breaſt of a brave man; neither does irreligion itſelf exempt the irreligious from a terrifying belief in ſpells and omens, or even from criminal inquiries into things to come: the mind of man is ſo formed, that it *muſt* fear, either upon reaſonable principles, or ſuperſtitiouſly, and without reaſon.

One might even admit, that Diocletian, either from nature, or in conſequence of inactivity after a life of labour, had weak nerves; but it does not therefore follow that he wanted perſonal courage. A man of unqueſtionable intrepidity in the field may be, like Diocletian, " in omni tumultu me-
" ticuloſus et animi dejectus." Hiſtory furniſhes many examples of this; and there was a famous general of our own, whoſe character

ter could not have been more juſtly drawn than in thoſe words of Lactantius.

Heathen writers ſpeak of Diocletian as Lactantius does, but in terms more general, after the manner of abridgers. Thus S. A. Victor, *p.* 172. " Valerio [Diocletiano] pa-
" rùm honeſta in amicos fides erat, diſcor-
" diarum ſanè *metu*," &c. And Eutropius, *l.* x. " Hic [Conſtantius] non modo amabi-
" bilis, ſed etiam venerabilis Gallis fuit:
" præcipuè quod Diocletiani *ſuſpectam pru-*
" *dentiam* et Maximiani ſanguinariam teme-
" ritatem imperio ejus evaſerant."

Nay more, there is a ſaying of Diocletian himſelf, *ap. Vopiſc.* Hiſt. Aug. Script. p. 224. " Bonus, *cautus*, optimus venditur Impera-
" tor." In this he meant to delineate his own character; and the man who complains that, notwithſtanding all his caution, he is impoſed on, may well be deſcribed as one of a character ſuſpicious and timid.

And, to add one authority more, Mr Gibbon,

Gibbon, in the very ſame page 424. appears to admit the truth of all that Lactantius ſays of Diocletian. " He appears not," ſays Mr Gibbon, " to have poſſeſſed the daring and " generous ſpirit of a hero who courts dan- " ger;"—like the adopted ſon of Cæſar, " he was diſtinguiſhed as a ſtateſman rather " than as a warrior." And at page 470. " Fear ſometimes purſued him into the ſo- " litude of Salona."

Had the hypotheſis of weak nerves and low ſpirits occurred to Mr Gibbon, it might have been held not unworthy of his attention; for it reconciles many diſcordant reports and opinions, by preſenting to our view a caſe, which, however rare in the *fourth* century, is perfectly familiar to us who live in the *eighteenth*.

P. 21. l. 9. " Of unbounded arrogance." The words in the MS. at this place are: " Et " contemnere omnia. Diocles enim ante " imperium vocabatur, cùm rempublicam

" talibus

" talibus consiliis et talibus sociis everteret." Le Nourry, *Disc. in L. Cecil. d. M. P.* p. 136. says, " Quænam autem, obsecro, est horum " verborum connexio, tametsi copulâ *enim* " conjungantur ? Quid ibi facit mutatum, " aut Dioclis nomen, aut hujus mutationis " commemoratio ? Nonnulli quidem suspi- " cantur in textu aliquid esse hiulcum aut " depravatum ; ita sanè et hic et alibi cor- " ruptionis ea insimulant, et loca et dicta, " quæ excusare non possunt " That the words, as they stand in the MS. are confused and without connection, is obvious. Le Nourry asserts this ; and yet he will not allow any emendation of them. His hypothesis is, that the treatise *de Mortibus Persecutorum* is very obscure and very ill written ; and therefore that Lactantius could not have been the author of it. In support of this hypothesis, he ascribes every error to the author himself, and seems to argue for the infallibility of the transcriber, whom, at the same

ſame time, he acknowledges to have been abſolutely ignorant of the Latin language. But, as all judicious critics muſt be ſenſible, that the treatiſe is in general perſpicuous and well written, they will aſcribe the manifeſt impropriety in this paſſage to the tranſcriber rather than to the author.

For *omnia* Gale reads *nomen*; but he did not advert to the improbability of the heroic meaſure, *contemnere nomen*, being introduced at the cloſe of a period. Beſides, this correction requires ſome additional word to make it intelligible; for what do the words *contemnere nomen* imply when taken by themſelves, and to what do they relate at this place? Grævius ſaw the difficulty, and therefore he added the word *Diocli*, [or rather *Dioclis*] But the expreſſion, as underſtood by Grævius, is languid and inſignificant. That Galerius ſhould have made light of the name of *Diocles*, after Diocletian ceaſed to be Emperor, is a circumſtance hardly

worth recording. It ſhould ſeem that the word *ſic*, or rather *ita*, has been omitted by the tranſcriber. " Diocles, *ita* enim ante " imperium vocabatur, cùm," &c. *Contemnere omnia* ſeems right, and probably means, that Galerius ſet at nought every thing as well divine as human.

Chap. X.

P. 22. l. 8. " The immortal ſign." Some authors, from a high opinion of the efficacy of that ſign, take a circumſtance for granted which ſurely requires proof. They ſuppoſe that the diviners who conſulted the intrails of the victims, were in league with evil dæmons, and that thoſe dæmons enabled them to judge of future events from certain appearances in the victims. Now, what evidence is there of this? The anſwer, I imagine, will be, that the diviners themſelves acknowledged it, by remarking, that buſineſs could not proceed while the Chriſtians were preſent. This is not ſatisfactory. The truth ſeems to be, that a company of impoſtors,

ſtors, occupied in deluding an aged and ſuperſtitious prince, did not chuſe to proceed in their holy ceremonies, while the *profane* and the *Atheiſts* remained ſpectators of them. The irreligion of the Chriſtians might be the *pretence*; but the true *reaſon* was, that the feats of divination could not be performed, without danger of detection, amidſt the enemies of Paganiſm.

That the diviners were aſſiſted by evil dæmons in the diſcovery of future events from the intrails of animals, was a ſuppoſition too raſhly adopted by many of the ancient Chriſtians; and to thoſe perſons who ſtill incline to maintain it, I would recommend a diſpaſſionate peruſal of the *ſecond* book of Cicero, *de Divinatione*.— Appius Pulcher, brother of the noted Clodius, "was admitted very "young into the college of augurs, and weak "enough to believe that there was a real "art and power of divining that ſubſiſted "in the augural diſcipline, and taught by

" the augural books: but he was the only " one at that time who maintained it, and " he was laughed at for his labour." *Not. ad Ciceron. Epiſt. ad Familiar.* i. 400. edit. *Roſs.* Notwithſtanding the authority of this excellent critic, to whom another age will do full juſtice, I ſhould be apt to ſuſpect, that Appius Pulcher was no *weaker* than his elder colleagues, and that he ſought the good opinion of the vulgar, at the expence of proſtituting his own underſtanding, as the wont is. He dedicated his treatiſe to Cicero, that Cicero might be obliged, either to ſupport the principles of the book, contrary to his own opinion, or to diſavow them, contrary to the prejudices of the populace; and thus, either hurt his own character or his credit. But Cicero ſaw the ſnare, and eluded it, by thanking Appius, in a parentheſis, for the honour done him. " Mihi et Q. Fabius " Virgilianus et C. Flaccus L. F. et, dili- " gentiſſimè, M. Octavius Cn. F. demon- " ſtravit

" ſtravit me a te plurimi fieri : quod ego-
" met multis argumentis jam antea judica-
" ram, *maximèque illo libro* augurali, *quem*
" *ad me amantiſſimè ſcriptum, ſuaviſſimum*
" *recepi*." *Epiſt.* iii. 4. edit. *Roſs.*

Chap. XI.

P. 24. l. 1. " Gods of the mountains." " Deorum montium." Some critics imagine that Lactantius meant to ſay, that the mother of Galerius paid divine worſhip to mountains. It is more probable that he alludes to the phraſe in the Old Teſtament, " Dii montium," or " Gods of the mountains." Perhaps the original reading was " montenſium," a word known in Latin, although not of claſſical authority.

P. 24. l. 4. " The Chriſtians would not " partake," [Chriſtiani abſtinebant,] becauſe it was not lawful for them to ſit down at idol-feaſts. That they faſted while their miſtreſs celebrated a feaſt, is a circumſtance very probable ; it was, however, a weak and peeviſh

peeviſh ſingularity, which their inſtitutions did not require, and which ill ſuited that prudence ſo earneſtly recommended by their maſter to his diſciples. Mr Gibbon, i. 648. briefly ſays, " That the mother of Galerius " was offended by the *diſregard* of ſome of " her Chriſtian ſervants." He might have ſaid, as briefly, and with more perſpicuity, " That ſhe was offended at their refuſal to " join in idol-feaſts."

P. 24. l. 18. " How pernicious it would " be to raiſe diſturbances throughout the " world, and to ſhed ſo much blood; that " the Chriſtians were wont with eagerneſs " to meet death," &c. [Quia perniciosum eſſet inquietari orbem terrarum, fundi ſanguinem multorum; illos libenter mori ſolere.] Mr Gibbon, i. 681. ſuppoſes, that " Diocletian urged in the ſtrongeſt " terms the danger as well as the *cruelty* of " ſhedding the blood of thoſe *deluded fanatics*." But there is nothing in Lactantius with

with reſpect to " the cruelty of ſhedding the " blood of thoſe deluded fanatics." The language of Diocletian is that of a politician, not of a moraliſt: the words employed by Lactantius are thoſe of Diocletian, and they are in character; but the verſion of Mr Gibbon expreſſes his own humane feelings.

P. 25. l. 10. " That his own fault might " be imputed to other men." [Ut aliorum culpæ aſcriberetur quicquid ipſe deliquerat.] Suidas has preſerved in his Collections a paſſage to the like purpoſe. ἐπεκάλυπτε πολλάκις τὰ τῆς οἰκείας φύσεως ἐλαττώματα, πᾶσαν σκληρὰν πρᾶξιν ἄλλοις ἀνατιθεὶς. " He was " wont to conceal the faults of his own na- " tural diſpoſition, by placing the ill that he " did to the account of others." So alſo Eutropius, ix. " Diocletianus moratus callidè " fuit, ſagax præterea, et admodum ſubtilis " ingenio, et *qui ſeveritatem ſuam alienâ in-* " *vidiâ vellet explere.*" The paraphraſe of Mr Gibbon expreſſes all that the hiſtorian meant,

meant, and expreſſes it with an energy of which the hiſtorian was incapable. " Ma-
" ximian, inſenſible to pity, and fearleſs
" of conſequences, was the ready inſtru-
" ment of every act of cruelty, which the
" policy of that artful prince [Diocletian]
" might at once ſuggeſt and diſclaim. As
" ſoon as a bloody ſacrifice had been offer-
" ed to prudence or to revenge, Diocletian,
" by his ſeaſonable interpoſition, ſaved the
" remaining few whom he had never de-
" ſigned to puniſh, gently cenſured the ſe-
" verity of his ſtern colleague, and enjoyed
" the compariſon of a golden and an iron
" age, which was univerſally applied to their
" oppoſite maxims of government." If this picture is like, *who* is there but muſt turn away his eyes from it with abhorrence? It is a picture ſketched by Lactantius and Eutropius, and finiſhed, with the utmoſt truth and vigour of colouring, by Mr Gibbon.

Chap. XII.

P. 27. l. 16. " An image of the divinity." [Simulacrum Dei quæritur.] Pagi. *Annal.* says, " Credibile *itaque* imagines *parûm* a " Chriſtianis uſurpatas fuiſſe, primis ferè " quatuor ſæculis." But another Roman-Catholic author, Baluze, candidly ſays, " Si- " mulacris *itaque* carebant eccleſiæ Chri- " ſtianorum." *Not. ad Lactant.* p. 28. Were all men as candid as Baluze, how many diſputes in eccleſiaſtical hiſtory might there be determined at the firſt hearing!

P. 27. l. 21. " That church, ſituated on " riſing ground, was within view of the pa- " lace; and Diocletian and Galerius ſtood, " *as if on a watch-tower*, diſputing long," &c. [Ipſi verò *in ſpeculis*, in alto enim conſtituta eccleſia, ex palatio videbatur, diu inter ſe concertabant.]

Moſheim, *d. Reb. Chriſtianorum ante Conſtant. M.* p. 917. ſays, that the Chriſtians of that age were ſtudious of erecting their

churches on elevated ground; but, in proof of this general propoſition, he gives no more than two examples, one of a church at Carthage, and the other of this church at Nicomedia. Mr Gibbon, i. 682. 683. ſays, "That the principal church at Nicomedia "was ſituated on an eminence in the moſt "populous and beautiful part of the city, "and that *it towered above the imperial pa-* "*lace.*" When the words of Lactantius are carefully inſpected, it will appear, that the church did not overlook the palace, but, on the contrary, that the palace overlooked the church.

Nicomedia was built on the ſide of a hill; *Pococke*'s Travels, vol. ii. part ii. p. 96. A church, erected about the middle of the hill, or, to uſe a colloquial phraſe, "half way "up the hill," might well be ſaid to have been erected on an eminence. There was no oſtentation in the choice of this ſite, as has ſometimes been affirmed; and there is

all

all poſſible reaſon for ſuppoſing that the palace at Nicomedia was built on the ſummit of the hill. The expreſſion, "ipſi in ſpeculis," implies, that the reſidence of the Emperors *towered above the church*; although the church, being on a riſing ground, and perhaps built to a greater height than the adjoining houſes, might be diſcernible from the palace. This will be underſtood by every reader who has ſeen a town ſituated on the ſide of a hill.

Chap. XIII.

P. 29. l. 6. "Improperly indeed, but with "high ſpirit." [Etſi non rectè, magno tamen animo.] We muſt not ſuppoſe that *non rectè* implies any thing tending to alleviate the offence. The claſſical ſenſe of it is, "very wrong"; and ſo Lactantius elſewhere uſes *non piè* for "impiouſly;" and, in like manner, *Non perfectè*, *non integrâ conſcientiâ*. Lactantius ſays that the edict was pulled down by *quidam*, "a certain perſon;"

and hence it has been concluded, that the man was obscure, and that Lactantius knew not *who* he was, and consequently that there is a diversity between that historian and the narrative in Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* viii. 5. where the offender is said to have been a person of eminence. But this is too critical. When Cicero says, *quidam ex philosophis*, he means not that the philosopher was obscure, or that his name was unknown; and as Lactantius highly disapproved of the conduct of that zealous but misguided Christian, he might have judged it expedient to make no mention of his name.

P. 29. l. 8. "The triumphs of Goths and "Sarmatians." [Victorias Gothorum et Sarmatarum præpositas.] Various have been the interpretations given of this fatal witticism.

Maucroix, the French translator of Lactantius, renders it thus: "Se moquant des "furnoms des *Gotiques* et *Sarmatiques* que "les Empereurs s'arrogeoyent."

Burnet,

Burnet, following the Oxford and Cambridge editors, says, " And rallied the Em-
" perors, who had put among their titles,
" that they had triumphed over the Goths
" and the Sarmatians, that they acted like
" those whom they pretended that they had
" subdued."

Boherel says, " Ironicè dictum, id est,
" Christianos, quamvis subditos, jam loco
" esse Gothorum et Sarmatarum debellan-
" dorum."

Grævius imagined that some error had crept into the text; but he proposed no emendation of it.

There seems to be a studied ambiguity in the expression. " This edict resembles a
" proclamation of victories *over* or *of* Goths
" and Sarmatians;" which may allude to the barbarous and obscure origin of Diocletian and Galerius.

Chap. XIV.

P. 30. l. 1. " Set the palace on fire." Lactantius

tantius aſcribes this to the contrivance of Galerius. Euſebius thus ſpeaks, H. E. viii. 6. "The fire happened *I know not how.*" [ὐκ οιδ' ὅπως.] But Conſtantine, in his harangue to the Faithful, c. 25. ſpeaking, as is generally ſuppoſed, of this event, ſays, that a flaſh of lightning ſet fire to the palace. [ἐδηȣ̃το μὲν τοι τὰ βασίλεια καὶ ὁ ὄικος ἀυτȣ ἐπινεμομένȣ σκηπτȣ, νεμομένης τε ȣ̓ρανίας φλογός.]

It was fit that Euſebius, who reſided at a great diſtance from Nicomedia, ſhould ſpeak with uncertainty; but it ſeems ſingular that Conſtantine and Lactantius, who at that time were on the ſpot, ſhould have given ſuch irreconcileable accounts of the cauſe of the fire.

Lactantius, it may be obſerved, ſpake from popular rumour alone; for there was no proof againſt Galerius and his domeſtics, and they never would have made a voluntary avowal of their guilt, although they had been

been indeed guilty; and therefore we muſt admit, that the authority of Conſtantine ought to be preferred to that of Lactantius, if both ſpeak of the ſame event. But this is doubtful. Conſtantine ſays, that the palace of Diocletian was ſet on fire by lightning, and that the Emperor, in conſequence of the accident, came to be diſturbed in his mind: but Conſtantine ſpeaks of this as having happened *after* the perſecution; and if ſo, the fire mentioned by Lactantius was different from that mentioned by Conſtantine.

P. 30. l. 4. " The very appellation of " *Chriſtian* grew odious on account of that " fire." [Et cum ingenti invidia ſimul cum palatio Chriſtianorum nomen ardebat.] The general ſenſe is here given inſtead of an exact tranſlation. There is a quibble on the word *ardere*, uſed in a metaphorical as well as a literal ſenſe. " The fire that invaded " the palace was not hotter than the zeal of " popular odium which flamed againſt the " Chriſtians."

" Chriſtians." For this mode of expreſſion there are claſſical precedents; it is, however, a fooliſh figure, which no precedents can juſtify.

P. 30. l. 7. " In concert with the eunuchs." A groundleſs charge! The eunuchs of Diocletian would never have endangered their own lives, and ruined their preſent fortunes, and all hopes of advancement, by cutting off that Emperor whoſe favourites they were; and if perſons profeſſing Chriſtianity had been the criminals, their guilt would have been diſcovered by means of the tortures promiſcuouſly applied. I ſay *perſons profeſſing Chriſtianity*; for there can be no incendiaries, or favourers of incendiaries, amongſt *real Chriſtians*.

Chap. XV.

P. 32. l. 1. " His wife *Priſca*." The name of the wife of Diocletian was unknown until the diſcovery of the MS. *d. M. P.* In the Acts of S. Suſanna, ſhe is ſtyled *Serena*; in

in the Acts of St George, *Alexandra*; and in the life of Pope Vigilius, *Gest. Pontif.* she is styled *Eleutheria*. This shews *what* credit is due to such writers!

P. 32. l. 6. "Without evidence, by witnesses or confession, condemned." [Sine probatione ad confessionem damnati.] The passage in the original is obscure, and perhaps the translation does not convey its just sense. Bauldri supposes, "that they were "condemned to become *confessors* for the "faith." But that interpretation appears uncouth. Mosheim. *d. Reb. Christianorum ante Constant. M.* p. 933. says, "Viri docti "nescientes, quid sit *ad confessionem damna-* "*ri*, vitiatum putant hunc locum, et sanare "volunt; sed satis ille sanus est, medicique "non indiget. Sensus est, etsi nullis, ut "jureconsulti loquuntur, indiciis gravati es- "sent Christiani sacerdotes, tamen tormen- "tis subjiciebantur, ut confiterentur, se aut "fratres et amicos eorum incendii auctores

 "esse,

" esse, quumque confiteri nollent, aut crucia-
" tibus nihil exprimi posset ex illis, tamen pro
" reis habebantur, et morte afficiebantur."
His meaning seems to be, " that tortures were
" applied to persons against whom there was
" neither evidence or presumption of guilt."

There are who read " sine probatione aut
" confessione;" that is, " without evidence,
" either by witnesses or by their own con-
" fession."

Chap. XVII.

P. 37. l. 3. " *There* to celebrate the com-
" mencement of the twentieth year of his
" reign." [Ut illic *vicennalium diem* cele-
braret.] A term of empire to which no one
since the æra of the Antonines had attain-
ed.

P. 37. l. 7. " Unable to bear the Roman
" freedom of speech." [Cùm libertatem
populi Romani ferre non poterat.] Mr
Gibbon, with a reference to this passage in
Lactantius, says, that " Diocletian was dis-
" gusted

" guſted with the licentious familiarity of " the people." But Lactantius ſpeaks not, either of freedom of ſpeech, or of licentious familiarity in general. He alludes to the liberty of the *Feriæ Saturnales*, or what Horace calls *Libertas Decembris*; and this is perfectly obvious from the dates here enumerated. Diocletian could not endure to reſide in Rome for *the thirteen days* that preceded the *firſt* of January. It follows that he left Rome on the *eighteenth* day of December. Now the *Feriæ Saturnales* commenced on the *ſeventeenth* day of December; and therefore the ſenſe of Lactantius is, that Diocletian had no ſooner experienced the ſarcaſtical merriment of the firſt day of the *Saturnalia*, than he hurried away from Rome. An old man, accuſtomed to the ſtate and the reſerve of an eaſtern monarch, could not but be diſguſted with the freedom of that levelling ſeaſon.

P. 37. l. 22. " He made a circuit," &c.

[Per circuitum ripæ Strigæ.] What is meant by this, and what was the road that Diocletian took in his journey to Nicomedia, has been a ſubject of ſerious controverſy amongſt learned men. It reminds one of the diſpute mentioned by Horace, "*Which* was the beſt "road from Rome to Brunduſium?" Alas! that the life of thoſe who live on this ſide the flood ſhould be too ſhort for ſuch important inquiries! Let us ſatisfy ourſelves with knowing, that Diocletian was at Ravenna, and that he went to Nicomedia, and that probably he took the *moſt convenient* road between the one city and the other.

P. 39. l. 4. "So wan — as hardly to be "known again." [Vix agnoſcendus, quippe qui tabuiſſet, &c.] He who prefers the elegancies of circumlocution to plain Engliſh, may read, "So pale and emaciated, that he "could ſcarcely have been *recogniſed* by "thoſe

" thoſe to whom *his perſon* was *the moſt fa-*
" *miliar.*"

Chap. XVIII.

P. 40. l. 1. " He now aſſailed Diocletian."
Of this conference Mr Gibbon ſays, i. 475.
" If it were poſſible to rely on the *partial*
" teſtimony of an *injudicious* writer, we
" might aſcribe the abdication of Diocletian
" to the menaces of Galerius, and relate the
" particulars of a *private* converſation be-
" tween the two princes, in which the for-
" mer diſcovered as much puſillanimity, as
" the latter diſplayed ingratitude and arro-
" gance." And he adds in a note, " Were
" the particulars of this conference more
" conſiſtent with *truth* and *decency*, we might
" ſtill aſk, how they came to the knowledge
" of an *obſcure* rhetorician? *But* there are
" many hiſtorians who put us in mind of
" the admirable ſaying of the great Condé
" to Cardinal de Retz. *Ces* coquins *nous font*
" *parler et agir, comme ils auroient fait eux*
" *mêmes*

" *mêmes à notre place.*" The ſum of all this appears to be, that the *obſcure* rhetorician, Lactantius, was *partial* and *injudicious*, a relater of things *inconſiſtent with truth and decency*, and, if I miſtake not the ſenſe of the word *coquin*, a *ſcoundrel* and a *raſcal.*

Had Lactantius been the contemporary of Mr Gibbon, and engaged in a *paper-war* with that elegant writer, it might be doubted whether *coquin* would have been a fair weapon, unleſs in the utmoſt extremity.

This *obſcure rhetorician* was, without controverſy, the moſt elegant writer of *his* age, and ſurely he might have been named without the addition of any contemptuous epithet.

Mr Gibbon aſks, " How the particulars " of the *private* conference came to the " knowledge of Lactantius ?" The anſwer muſt be conjectural ; for Lactantius does not ſay from whom he heard them ; and indeed although he had, it is not probable that Mr Gibbon

Gibbon would have credited his report: for by what means could an author come to the knowledge of what is inconſiſtent with truth? and had Lactantius ſaid, that he received his information from Conſtantine himſelf, who was then at court, this would have added to his effrontery, but would not have made him more credible in the opinion of his cenſurer; for he would ſtill have been an *obſcure ſcoundrel*, who related things *inconſiſtent with truth and decency*.

Let it be obſerved in paſſing, that Lactantius does not ſay that the conference was altogether private, for he ſpeaks of Maximin Daia as being preſent.

We learn from a curious paſſage in Vopiſcus, *Hiſt. Aug. Script.* p. 224. that Diocletian, after his retirement, converſed familiarly with the acquaintance of his youth, that he ſcrupled not to point out ſome errors in his own adminiſtration, and even attempted to apologiſe for them. Hence we

may

may reaſonably conclude, that Diocletian omitted not to complain of the harſh uſage received from Galerius; and there can be no doubt that Galerius, being what he was, would boaſt of the influence which he ſucceſsfully exerted over Diocletian. And thus we cannot ſuppoſe that this converſation, although it had been private, could have remained a ſecret, while the reſentment of Diocletian, and the vanity of Galerius, naturally concurred in diſcloſing it.

But it is ſaid, that the particulars related by Lactantius are inconſiſtent with truth and decency, becauſe they bring a charge of puſillanimity againſt Diocletian, and of ingratitude and arrogance againſt Galerius.

Lactantius, however, obſerves, that, at that time, Diocletian was juſt recovering from a long and dangerous indiſpoſition, which had weakened his body, and impaired his mental faculties. Beſides, he had reaſon to be alarmed at the growing power and

augmented

augmented armies of Galerius. Here there was juſt cauſe of dread; and indeed there is internal evidence that Diocletian acted from compulſion, and not from choice, when he raiſed Severus and Daia to ſovereign power. "It was their want of merit and perſonal "conſequence," as Mr Gibbon well obſerves, i. 479. "that chiefly recommended them." And it is incredible that the politic Diocletian would have admitted ſuch worthleſs and inſignificant perſons to a ſhare in the empire of the world, if he could have prevented a nomination equally diſgraceful and pernicious.

Are the ingratitude and arrogance of Galerius circumſtances ſo very incredible?

Gratitude is a plant which ſeldom ſprings up and flouriſhes in the breaſt of a Galerius. Nor is it ſtrange, that a man elevated from the meaneſt rank to ſupreme dominion, proſperous in war, environed with ſlaves and flatterers, and having mighty armies at his com-

mand, ſhould be arrogant. Indeed, to uſe an expreſſion of Lord Shafteſbury, it would not have been "according to the truth of "art," had Lactantius delineated Galerius in other colours.

P. 40. l. 8. "Nerva." To the ſame purpoſe S. A. Victor ſays, "Ubi proſpexit, [im-"perium] niſi a ſuperioribus robuſtiori-"buſque corpore animoque geri non poſſe, "—ſemet eo abdicavit." *Cæſar.* p. 126. It is probable, however, that Nerva never abdicated the empire, in the proper ſenſe of the word *abdicate*, although he laid the whole charge of government on Trajan. He adopted Trajan, xiv. kal. Octob. A. U. C. 850. [18th Sept.] He died, after a ſhort illneſs, vi. kalend. Feb. A. U. C. 851. [27th Jan.] At that time Nerva and Trajan were conſuls. Pliny ſays, *Paneg.* p. 57. "Secundum [con-"ſulatum] imperator quidem, *ſub impera-"tore* tamen iniſti." This ſhews, that on the 1ſt of January, A. U. C. 851. Nerva was conſidered

conſidered as Emperor. As he died on the 27th of January in that year, after an illneſs of a few days, it follows, that this abdication, if it happened at all, muſt have happened in the courſe of the firſt three weeks of January. Now it is hardly poſſible that Nerva would have aſſumed the office of conſul, and immediately after have retired to a private ſtation.

It is not difficult to trace the origin of this popular report of the abdication of Nerva. Every one knew that the Emperor, unable to repreſs the inſolence and rebellion of the pretorian guards, called Trajan to his aid, adopted him, and inveſted him with imperial authority: it was alſo known that Trajan had the entire adminiſtration of public affairs; and *that* ſaying of Nerva was remembered, "I have done nothing that can "hinder me from laying down my power, "and living with ſecurity in a private ſtation." *Dion Caſſius*, lxviii. Thoſe circum-

 ſtances,

ſtances, when taken together, might naturally give riſe to the notion, that Nerva did abdicate the empire. It is remarkable that Diocletian, in contraſting his own ſituation with that of Nerva, obſerved, that with regard to himſelf, to reſign was "minus *tu-* "*tum*, quòd in tam longo imperio multo- "rum ſibi odia quæſiſſet." This obviouſly alludes to the memorable ſaying of Nerva. [ἀσφαλως ἰδιωτεῦσαι.]

P. 44. l. 4. "How! that dancer," &c. [Illumne ſaltatorem, temulentum, ebrioſum, cui nox pro die, et dies pro nocte.] A character excellently confirmed by a paſſage in an anonymous compiler, whoſe work is ſubjoined to Ammianus Marcellinus in the edition of H. Valeſius. "Erat ignobilis et "moribus et natalibus, *ebrioſus*, et *hoc* Ga- "lerio amicus."

Mr Gibbon, i. 479. ſoftens the harſh lines of the portrait. The Severus of Lactantius and of the anonymous compiler, is "a rio-

"tous

" tous drunken ſot," and eſteemed, on that account, by Galerius. But the Severus of Mr Gibbon is only " addicted to pleaſure." In what follows Mr Gibbon is ſingularly inaccurate. He ſays, " the diligence and fi- " delity of Severus are acknowledged *even* " by Lactantius." But Lactantius neither blames nor applauds Severus; he ſimply relates what was ſpoken of him by Diocletian and Galerius: and ſuppoſing the narrative of the conference to have been altogether a fiction, Mr Gibbon ought not to have drawn the character of Severus from that fiction.

P. 44. l. 8. " A faithful paymaſter and " purveyor." Offices not ſo mean as an unlearned reader might imagine. Severus was probably *Quæſtor* in the armies of Galerius.

" *Præbere annonam*," and *præbere ſtipendia*, are unexceptionable phraſes; yet the propriety of *præbere*, uſed abſolutely, is queſtioned. Hence *præfuit* has been ſuggeſted as an emendation for *præbuit*. But why ſhould

ſhould we be ſo anxious in bringing the language of the fourth century to the ſtandard of the Auguſtan age? Beſides, when we recollect that not one hundredth part of the writings of the Auguſtan age is preſerved, we ought to be cautious in condemning a phraſe as new and illegitimate on account of its not being diſcovered in that hundredth part.

The reaſon aſſigned by Galerius for his recommendation of Severus is highly characteriſtical: "He who has acted faithfully "in the office of purveyor and paymaſter, "is capable of fitly diſcharging the duties "of a *Cæſar*." Every age affords examples of a ſimilar mode of reaſoning adopted by injudicious great men.

Chap. XIX.

P. 45. l. 14. "Every one looked at Con-"ſtantine." [Conſtantinum omnes intuebantur.] Whenever Lactantius ſpeaks of Conſtantine before his acceſſion to ſovereign authority,

authority, it is in artful and elegant ſtrains of commendation, as if he were preparing his readers to expect great atchievements from the hero of the ſtory.

P. 46. l. 3. " An eminence." [Locus altus.] Mr Gibbon, i. 467. ſays, " On a ſpa- " cious plain," probably for the convenience of the aſſembled multitudes. But although there were " a ſpacious plain" in the neighbourhood of Nicomedia, the words *locus altus* can never bear that ſenſe.

P. 46. l. 10. " That he was become in- " firm, that he needed repoſe after his fa- " tigues, and that he would reſign the em- " pire into hands more vigorous and able." [Se invalidum eſſe, requiem poſt labores quærere, imperium *validioribus* tradere.] Whatever might have been the true cauſes of the reſignation of Diocletian, it was publicly aſcribed to his bad health and his growing infirmities. Thus the panegyriſt of Maximian Herculius, and Conſtantine, § 9. ſays,

ſays, " However allowable it might have " been for *that* prince to found a retreat, " whom years urged, and whom health had " deſerted, yet that *you*, with ſuch unim- " paired ſtrength, with ſuch vigour in all " your limbs, with that fire in your eyes " which befits ſovereign command, we mar- " vel indeed that *you* ſhould have entertain- " ed the hopes of premature retirement and " eaſe." [Sed tamen utcunque fas fuerit *eum* principem, *quem anni cogerent*, *aut valetudo deficeret*, receptui canere, te verò, in quo adhuc iſtæ [f. integræ] ſolidæque vires, hic totius corporis vigor, hic imperatorius ardor oculorum, immaturum otium ſperaſſe miramur.]

Chap. XXI.

P. 51. l. 5. " Into work-houſes." [In gynæceum.] Some interpret this to ſignify " the ſeraglio," but without any reaſon. See *Du Cange*, v. *Gynæceum*.

Chap.

Chap. XXIV.

P. 58. l. 9. " He had made a like requeſt " long before, but in vain." [Quem jamdudum *fruſtra repetierat.*] The words, *fruſtra repetierat*, are not in the MS. Something, however, of that kind is neceſſary to complete the ſenſe of the paſſage. Moſheim, *d. Reb. Chriſt. ante Conſtantin. M.* p. 949. underſtands Lactantius to mean that Galerius invited Conſtantine back after his flight into Britain. [Tentabat enim Conſtantinum blanditiis ex Britannia elicere, et ad aulam revocare.] But there is nothing in Lactantius that can bear any ſuch meaning.

P. 59. l. 4. " A warrant." [Dedit ſigillum.] Le Nourry, p. 323. underſtands this to be the *evictio* in the Theodoſian Code, *l.* 4. *d. curſu publico*; that is, in modern language, " a warrant, ſigned and ſealed, for " poſt-horſes."

P. 59. l. 12. " Carried off from the prin- " cipal ſtages all the horſes maintained at

" the public expence." [Sublatiſque per manſiones multas omnibus equis publicis, evolavit.] This is related by Lactantius in a ſimple and probable manner. In other hiſtorians, as Mr Gibbon obſerves, i. 482. it is " a very fooliſh ſtory." Thus S. A. Victor ſays, " Cùm ad fruſtrandos inſequen-" tes, publica jumenta, quaqua iter egerat, " interficeret." *d. Cæſar.* p. 173. Zoſimus, l. ii. ſays, that " Conſtantine cauſed all the " poſt-horſes that he had uſed to be ham-" ſtrung." And to the ſame purpoſe, the anonymous writer publiſhed by Valeſius, " Veredis poſt ſe truncatis."

Mr Gibbon, in deſcribing Conſtantine's courſe, ſays, " Leaving the palace of Nicome-" dia in the night, he travelled poſt through " Bithynia, Thrace, Dacia, Pannonia, Ita-" ly, and Gaul." i. 482. It ſhould ſeem, that, without departing from hiſtorical evidence, we might abridge this journey a little. It is probable that, at that time, Galerius

was

was in Illyricum, and not at Nicomedia. This will cut off Bithynia, Thrace, and Dacia.

The anonymous writer, publiſhed by Valeſius, ſays, " Summâ feſtinatione — *Alpes* " *tranſgreſſus*, ad patrem Conſtantium ve- " nit." The hiſtorian would hardly have begun his narrative at the Alps, if he had ſuppoſed that Conſtantine ſet out from Aſia.—Eutropius, l. x. ſays of Galerius, "Ip- " ſe in Illyrico commoratus eſt." Conſtantine was raiſed to ſovereign power, viii. *kal. Aug.* [25th July] in the year 306 of the vulgar æra. *Faſti Idatiani*, on vi. *kal. Nov.* in the ſame year [27th Oct. 306.] The pretorian bands at Rome choſe Maxentius Emperor, *Lactantius*, *d. M. P.* c. 44. And from the ſame treatiſe, c. 26. we learn, that Galerius, on hearing of the election of Maxentius, ſent for Severus, put under his command the army that had belonged to Maximian Herculius, and encouraged him to aſſail

Rome. It is alſo ſaid in the ſame chapter, that Maxentius feared leſt Galerius ſhould leave Severus in Illyricum, and march into Italy with his own army. Now, all this is inconſiſtent with the notion, that, at that time, Galerius did reſide at Nicomedia in Bithynia; nor leſs ſo is the account of the invaſion of Italy by Galerius.—Eumenius, *Paneg. Conſtant. Aug.* § 14. ſays, that Maximian Herculius was "ab *Illyrico* repudiatus;" which implies that Galerius reſided in that province—It is certain that Galerius, after his retreat from Italy, named Licinius Emperor, at Carnutum in Pannonia [part of Illyricum], iii. *Id. Nov.* [11th November.] *Faſti Idatiani. Proſper Aquitanus.* Zoſimus alludes to this, l. ii. where he ſpeaks of Diocletian being ἐν Καρνοῦντῳ πόλει Κελτικῇ. in *Carnutum*, a Celtic city. Zoſimus, not having judgement enough to conceal his own ignorance, explained *Carnutum* to be *Chartres* in France. As to the year in which Licinius

Licinius was named Emperor, there is a difference of opinion amongſt learned men. Some place that event in 307, and others in 308. That circumſtance, however, does not materially affect the preſent queſtion.

The reſult of the whole ſeems to be, that it is probable that when Conſtantine took flight, Galerius reſided in Illyricum, and not at Nicomedia; and thus the journey which Conſtantine performed will loſe much of its romantic appearance.

P. 60. l. 13. " And ſo began his admini- " ſtration by re-eſtabliſhing the holy reli- " gion." [Hæc fuit prima ejus ſanctio, ſanctæ religionis *reſtituta*.] The laſt word can hardly be brought within the rules of grammatical conſtruction. The emendations propoſed are, *reſtitutæ*, *ſua reſtituta*, *templa reſtituta*, *reſtitutio*. Bauldri obſerves, that *reſtituta* might, by analogy, mean the ſame thing as *reſtitutio*. Thus, in Apuleius, *adlocuta* is put for *adlocutio*; in Tertullian, *defenſa*

fenſa for *defenſio*; and in Cyprian, *remiſſa* for *remiſſio*.

To this event it is ſuppoſed that Lactantius alludes in the Preface to his Inſtitutes. "Quod opus nunc nominis tui auſpicio inchoamus, Conſtantine Imperator Maxime, qui primus Romanorum Principum, repudiatis erroribus, Majeſtatem Dei Singularis ac Veri cognoviſti et honoraſti. Nam cùm ille dies feliciſſimus orbi terrarum illuxiſſet, quo te Deus Summus ad beatum imperii culmen evexit, ſalutarem univerſis et optabilem principatum præclaro initio auſpicatus es; cùm everſam ſublatamque juſtitiam reducens, teterrimum aliorum facinus expiaſti." One might, however, conjecture that this elegant eulogium alluded to the edict of Conſtantine and Licinins in behalf of the Chriſtians.

That Chriſtianity prevailed in the weſt of Europe about the beginning of the fourth century, and that Polytheiſm viſibly declined,

ned, may be inferred from the conduct of Conſtantine, who, in the early favour that he ſhewed to the Chriſtians, muſt be preſumed to have acted on principles of policy, and not from religious conviction.

Chap. XXVI.

P. 63. l. 2. " Put ſome magiſtrates to " death." [Occiſis quibuſdam judicibus.] The pretorian ſoldiers killed Abellius, the Governor of Rome. *Zoſimus*, l. ii.

P. 64. l. 14. " Given to change." [Rerum novarum cupidus.] Julian ſays, that Herculius was φιλοπράγμων καὶ ἄπιστος. *Cæſar.* " One who would always be doing, " and in whoſe ſincerity no confidence could " be put."

P. 64. l. 19. " The ſoldiers—abandoned " Severus." " Duxerat magnum Severus " exercitum, et hoſtem ſuum, perfidiâ deſer- " tus, armaverat." *Incert. Paneg. Conſt. Aug.* § 3.

At the end of this chapter there are theſe words :

words: " Ab hoc capite ſuos perſequi." Different conjectures have been propoſed, in order to ſupply the words that are evidently wanting. " Ab hoc *cœpit* ſuos perſequi." *N. Heinſius.* " Ab hoc capite, ſuos perſe- " qui *cœperunt*." *Tollius.* This is hardly intelligible; for to whom does *cœperunt* relate? Bunemannus ſays, " Cogitavi quoque legi " poſſe, *ob hoc ſuos cœpit perſequi*; id eſt, ob " Severum occiſum, Galerius ſuos, generum " ſcilicet et generi patrem, perſequi cœpit." But how could Herculius be called in Latin the *ſuus* of Galerius? and how can it be ſaid that Galerius *began* hoſtilities againſt Herculius and Maxentius on account of the death of Severus, ſince it is certain that Galerius encouraged Severus to invade Italy? Heuman thinks that the words ought to be ſtruck out, which, no doubt, is the eaſieſt method for a critic to get rid of a *locus deſperatus*.

Chap.

Chap. XXVII.

P. 66. l. 17. " Some of his legions," &c. [Quædam legiones, &c.] Mr Gibbon, i. 491. firſt miſtakes the meaning of Lactantius, and then ridicules him. " We are informed," ſays he, " that the legions themſelves were " ſtruck with horror and remorſe, and that " thoſe pious ſons of the republic refuſed " to violate the ſanctity of their venerable " parent. But when we reflect with how " much eaſe, in the more ancient civil wars, " the zeal of party and the habits of mili- " tary obedience had converted the native " citizens of Rome into her moſt implacable " enemies, we ſhall be inclined to diſtruſt " this extreme delicacy of ſtrangers and " barbarians, who had never beheld Italy " till they entered it in a hoſtile manner."

" The zeal of party and the habits of mi- " litary obedience," exiſted not in the age of Galerius, however well ſuch things may ſerve to deck out a period. Even in this

ſhort hiſtory by Lactantius, there are examples of defection amongſt veteran troops, and of revolts of whole armies.

It may alſo be fit to obſerve, that Lactantius, inſtead of ſpeaking of the legions *in general*, ſpeaks of *ſome legions* only, and that there is no reaſon for ſuppoſing that *all* the troops of Galerius were ſtrangers and barbarians.

Beſides, Mr Gibbon overlooks one material part of the narrative of Lactantius. The ſoldiers recollected that they were ſerving the father-in-law againſt the ſon-in-law. The remembrance of the ancient civil wars might have alarmed them, and they might have fancied that their ſervice under Galerius, the father-in-law of Maxentius, was ominous, and portended that deſtruction awaited them ſimilar to that of the armies of Pompey; and *this* is the more probable, becauſe it appears from numberleſs examples, that the Heathens

Heathens of that age were immoderately ſuperſtitious.

And perhaps there was another cauſe for their ſuperſtition. From the days of Auguſtus Rome had become a Divinity, partly through the pride of the Roman people, and partly in conſequence of the obſequiouſneſs of the vanquiſhed nations. What notion it was that men formed to themſelves of the Divinity of walls and houſes, or of the Divinity of a ſtate in general, it is impoſſible for us to conceive; but there might be a certain dread in rude uncultivated minds of what had, for ages, been repreſented as ſomething ſupernatural and venerable.

Mr Gibbon cenſures Lactantius for another circumſtance in his narrative. "We "are told," ſays he, "that Galerius, who "had formed a very imperfect notion of "the greatneſs of Rome by the cities of the "Eaſt, with which he was acquainted, found "his forces inadequate to the ſiege of that

" immenſe capital. But the extent of a city " ſerves only to render it more acceſſible to " the enemy. Rome had long ſince been " accuſtomed to ſubmit on the approach of " a conqueror, nor could the temporary " enthuſiaſm of the people have long con- " tended againſt the diſcipline and valour of " the legions."

It is probable enough that Lactantius may have ſpoken with ſome degree of that vanity incident to all men whenever the honour of the metropolis of their nation is concerned: but his obſervation is not ſo very trivial as Mr Gibbon imagines.

Galerius needed a larger army than what he had with him to inveſt Rome. [Ad circumſedenda mœnia]; and it would have been hazardous to beſiege an extenſive city without inveſting it.

The extent of a city may render it more acceſſible to the enemy when the garriſon is weak, not ſo when it is ſtrong; and in hiſtory

ſtory there are many examples of cities that have been ſucceſsfully defended, notwithſtanding their great extent, and the weakneſs of their works, becauſe their garriſons were numerous, and had full room to act.

The enthuſiaſm of a people is not altogether temporary in its nature, or always unable to contend againſt the valour and diſcipline of legions.

But, indeed, Mr Gibbon forgets the ſtate of the city of Rome at that time, and he loſes ſight of the pretorian bands, and of the army that formerly belonged to Maximian Herculius. Theſe compoſed part of the garriſon of Rome; and probably they were as brave and as well diſciplined, and perhaps as numerous, as the troops of Galerius.

Chap. XXVIII.

P. 68. l. 17. "Maxentius." Mr Gibbon, i. 494. ſays, "Maxentius conſidered himſelf "as the legal ſovereign of Italy, elected by "the Roman ſenate and people; nor would "he

" he endure the controul of his father, who " arrogantly declared, that by *his* name and " abilities the raſh youth had been eſtabliſh- " ed on the throne." Thus far Mr Gibbon, by paraphraſing the narrative of Lactantius, appears to have admitted its authority. But he adds: " The cauſe was ſolemn- " ly pleaded before the pretorian guards, " and thoſe troops, who dreaded the ſeve- " rity of the old Emperor, eſpouſed the " party of Maxentius." *Here* Mr Gibbon departs altogether from Lactantius, but without juſt cauſe: for Eutropius, l. x. ſays, " Herculius tamen Maximianus poſt hæc in " concione exercitûs filium Maxentium *de-* " *nudare* conatus, ſeditionem et convicia " militum tulit." And the anonymous author of the Panegyric addreſſed to Conſtanſtine, ſays, § 3. " Ipſe denique, qui pater " ejus credebatur, *diſciſſam ab humeris purpu-* " *ram detrahere* conatus, ſenſerat in illud " dedecus ſua fata tranſiſſe." The circumſtances,

ſtances, briefly mentioned by thoſe two authors, are related at greater length by Lactantius.

Chap. XXX.

P. 75. l. 9. "Strangled himſelf." In the original it is, "Et nodum informis leti trabe "nectit ab altâ." From Virgil's account of the death of Amata, Æn. xii. thus tranſlated by Pitt,

"Then on a lofty beam, the matron tied
"The nooſe diſhoneſt, and obſcenely died."

But, in Engliſh, no pomp of words can dignify hanging.

The obſervations of Moſheim on the death of Maximian Herculius are ſingular. "Con- "ſtantine," ſays he, "received the impe- "rial purple and a wife from Herculius, "and *certainly it was a deed of atrocious* "*wickedneſs* in Conſtantine to compel Her- "culius to die by his own hands. [Atrox "ſine dubio flagitium.] According to Lac-

"tantius,

" tantius, *d. M. P. c.* 30. the permiſſion of
" chuſing the mode of his death was grant-
" ed to the father-in-law by the ſon-in-law,
" and Herculius uſed that permiſſion by
" ſtrangling himſelf. How cruel this fa-
" vour conferred by a ſon-in-law on his
" father-in-law! Herculius, I admit, was
" guilty of a great crime; for, *if thoſe things*
" *be true* that Lactantius and other hiſto-
" rians relate, he plotted againſt the life of
" Conſtantine. This, however, does not ef-
" face the ſtains of cruelty and inhumanity
" from the character of Conſtantine. Grant-
" ing Herculius to have merited ſuch pu-
" niſhment, it ſurely was *a moſt unworthy*
" *part* in Conſtantine to award it [certè in-
" digniſſimum] againſt a father-in-law, vene-
" rable for his grey hairs." *d. Reb. Chriſt. ante Conſtant. M.* p. 953.

The propoſition maintained by Moſheim is, " That Conſtantine ought to have ſpared
" the life of Herculius." In this propoſi-

tion

tion the guilt of Herculius muſt be taken for granted; becauſe, if he was an innocent perſon, there can be no doubt that Conſtantine did an act of moſt atrocious wickedneſs in murdering him. Moſheim, however, attempts to call in queſtion the truth of what Lactantius and other hiſtorians have related concerning the guilt of Herculius, or, at leaſt, to render it problematical. This attempt to change the ſtate of the caſe is not in the ſtyle of a juſt reaſoner.

Herculius was guilty of one of the fouleſt treaſons imaginable. He, a private man, plotted to aſſaſſinate his Sovereign, and *that* under truſt.

That Herculius was *a private man*, will not be diſputed, unleſs it ſhould be held, that an Emperor elevated to that rank, by whatever means, muſt continue an Emperor, although thoſe means which elevated ſhould have failed to ſupport him, and although he himſelf

ſhould have choſen to retire to a private ſtation.

That Conſtantine was the *Sovereign* of Herculius, will be as little diſputed; for Herculius was a private man, reſiding in Gaul, within the dominions of Conſtantine.

And that the attempt to aſſaſſinate was *under truſt*, cannot well be controverted; for Herculius, on account of his relation to Conſtantine, had confidential acceſs at all times to every part of the palace, and was, in the expreſſive language of antiquity, the *Hoſpes* of the Emperor.

Now, what were the reaſons in morality which ought to have induced Conſtantine to ſpare the life of Herculius, and which made it *a deed of atrocious wickedneſs* to put him to death?

Moſheim urges *two*: 1*ſt*, That Conſtantine received the imperial purple from Herculius; 2*dly*, That Herculius gave his daughter Fauſta in marriage to Conſtantine.

As

As to the *firſt*, The truth is, that Conſtantine owed no debt of gratitude to Herculius on that account; for it was not by any good offices of his that Conſtantine obtained ſovereign power.

And with reſpect to the *ſecond*, Had Herculius given an empire as a portion with Fauſta, there would have been a wide range for argument, and it might have been a work of ages to ſolve the doubts in caſuiſtry ariſing from that ſtate of the fact. Indeed there are queſtions of the like nature depending amongſt ſpeculative men, and it is probable that they will depend unto the conſummation of all things; for there are neither parties nor judges competent to terminate the controverſy. But the marriage of Fauſta and Conſtantine was merely a politic alliance, intimating to the world that Herculius and Conſtantine were in amity, and not implying that the one conferred, or that the other received a favour.

Whatever obligations Conſtantine might be ſuppoſed to have been under to Herculius on obtaining Fauſta in marriage, they were completely cancelled when Herculius endeavoured to perſuade Fauſta to diſſolve that marriage, by conniving at the aſſaſſination of her huſband.

Thus then, in morality, Conſtantine was not bound to ſpare the life of Herculius; and conſequently did nothing blame-worthy in putting him to death. It only remains to inquire, whether, in ſound policy, he ought to have ſuffered him to live; and the inquiry will be ſhort. Herculius was a ſoldier of fortune, advanced to the higheſt dignity for his talents and ſervices in war, and a man of unbounded liberality to the armies under his command. Such a perſon muſt have been exceedingly dangerous in thoſe looſe times, a perſon whom it was not ſafe to permit to live.

Speculative reaſoners may ſay, "Why

"not

" not condemn Herculius to perpetual im-
" priſonment, or baniſh him to ſome re-
" mote province ?" But *where* was the ſe-
cure priſon to which Herculius might have been committed, or *what* was that province in which he might have been placed, without any danger of his exciting new diſorders, and of verifying the proverbial ſpeech of " tyrants returning from exile ?"

Mr Gibbon, i. 496. concludes his account of the fate of Maximian Herculius with this note. " Eumenius, in *Paneg. Vet.* vii. 16.
" to 21. has undoubtedly repreſented the
" whole affair in the moſt favourable light
" for his Sovereign; yet even from his par-
" tial narrative we may conclude, that *the*
" *repeated clemency* of Conſtantine, and the
" reiterated treaſons of Maximian, as they
" are deſcribed by Lactantius, *d. M. P.* 29.
" 30. and copied by the moderns, are *deſti-*
" *tute of any hiſtorical foundation* ;" that is, in other words, *they are pure fictions.*

The

The charge is weighty, but the evidence is very light. One circumſtance is mentioned through inadvertency; for Lactantius ſays nothing of "the repeated clemency" of Conſtantine; ſo that the queſtion is as to "the "reiterated treaſons" of his father-in-law.

Different hiſtorians relate, that Herculius plotted againſt the life of Conſtantine, and that Fauſta informed her huſband of the plot. They ſuppoſe, indeed, that this happened *before* the flight of Herculius to Marſeilles, a thing hardly intelligible; for, that Herculius reaſſumed the imperial purple, ſeized the treaſury, and won over ſome part of Conſtantine's army by his largeſſes, were facts publicly known, and of which Conſtantine muſt have been appriſed without any information from his wife Fauſta. This of itſelf ſhews that the diſcovery made by Fauſta reſpected ſomething different from open and avowed uſurpation. And, if that is the caſe, the narrative given by Lactantius will appear

appear probable, and that of the other writers perplexed and obſcure.

Eumenius, indeed, makes no mention of the ſtory related in *c.* 30. *d. M. P.*; but the caſe of Fauſta, who "ſacrificed the ſenti-"ments of nature to her conjugal duties," would have been an untoward theme for panegyric; and we may obſerve, that Eumenius is ſo far from engaging in any details, that he but ſlightly touches on the fate of Herculius, and that he even prefaces what he ſays with an apology for treating of that ſubject at all. "De quo ego quemadmo-"dum dicam, adhuc fermè dubito — quid "faciam igitur, ut tam profunda vulnera "ſuſpensâ manu tractem?" § 14.

Lactantius deſerves praiſe, becauſe, like a candid hiſtorian, he acknowledges that Conſtantine commanded Herculius to die; but ſuch praiſe is not due to Eumenius, who, like a panegyriſt, conceals the truth, and endeavours to make his auditors ſuppoſe that

Herculius

Herculius died voluntarily. At § 14. he ſpeaks of the "voluntarium exitium" of the old Emperor; and at § 20. he ſays, that Conſtantine declined ſtorming Marſeilles, becauſe "*illi* te intelligimus peperciſſe, quem, "ſi prima copiam habuiſſet irruptio, eripere "ferro nemo potuiſſet; ita quod ad pieta-"tem tuam pertinuit, Imperator, et *illum*, "et omnes quos receperat, reſervaſti. *Si-*"*bi imputet quiſquis uti noluit beneficio tuo*, "*nec ſe dignum vitâ judicavit, cum per te* "*liceret ut viveret*. Tu, quod ſufficit con-"ſcientiæ tuæ, etiam non merentibus pe-"perciſti, ſed ignoſce dicto, non omnia po-"tes, *Dii te vindicant et invitum*."

There is another circumſtance in the conduct of Conſtantine, which, although little obſerved, ſeems much leſs juſtifiable than his treatment of Herculius, and that is, his expoſing the poor ſlave to inevitable death, that the treaſon of Herculius might become more manifeſt. *This* was hardly conſiſtent with

with the rules of morality. There are caſes in which a man may be ſo circumſtanced, that his immediate determination *will* be ſuch, as, on *reflection*, he will not be able to reconcile with exact morality; but the circumſtances in which Conſtantine was placed, appear not to have authoriſed his devoting a ſlave to death. We ought to aſcribe this to the principles of Paganiſm, by which ſlaves were conſidered merely as chattles. Chriſtianity has put it in the power of men to think and act more generouſly: but Chriſtianity compels no man; and he that is unmerciful and unjuſt, may be unmerciful and unjuſt *ſtill*.

Chap. XXXIII.

P. 79. l. 20. "God ſtruck him," &c. Galerius appears to have been of a bad habit of body, produced by intemperance. His diſeaſe was a fiſtulous ulcer, which, either from its poſition, or in conſequence of unſkilful management, communicated with ſome of

the large veins. It is pitiful to see how injudiciously the case of this wretched Emperor was treated. The surgeons employed the knife without eradicating the ulcer, and, without clearing away the foundation, hastily healed up the surface. The consequences were such as might have been looked for. Lactantius gives a large and scientific account of the symptoms, progress, and crisis of the distemper. It was impossible, in the version, at once to preserve the sense of the original, and to avoid altogether the detail of nauseous circumstances.

Mr Gibbon, i. 497. *mistakes the Emperor's case*; for he says, that "his body — was "*covered* with ulcers."

What he adds is more material. "As "Galerius had *offended* a very zealous and "powerful party among his subjects, his "sufferings, instead of exciting their com-"passion, have been celebrated as the visible "effects of divine justice." In consequence

of

of a ſingular and unexampled arrangement of Mr Gibbon's work, we do not learn till long afterwards, that this *very zealous and powerful party* means *the Chriſtians*, and that the thing which *offended* them was a brutal perſecution of *ſix* years. *He* muſt require more from man than humanity is capable of, who ſuppoſes, that compaſſion for an inexorable tyrant could have been an early emotion in the minds of men who had endured ſuch tedious and complicated miſeries without any cauſe or provocation.

P. 81. l. 17. " Worms were generated in " his body." [*Vermes* intus creantur] Mr. Gibbon, i. 497. ſays, " His—body was de- " voured by innumerable ſwarms of *thoſe* " *inſects*, who have given their name to a " moſt *loathſome diſeaſe*." But the words of Lactantius give not the leaſt hint concerning the *louſy diſeaſe*; on the contrary, they are unambiguous, and refer to ſomething very different.

There is a note at this place, which muſt not paſs unobſerved. " If," ſays Mr Gibbon, " any, *like* the late Dr Jortin, *Remarks on Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory*, ii. 307.—356. iii. " 247.—289. ſtill *delight* in recording the " wonderful deaths of the perſecutors, I " would recommend to their peruſal an ad- " mirable paſſage of Grotius, Hiſt. vii. 332. " concerning the laſt illneſs of Philip II. of " Spain." *Gibbon*, i. 497.

This very harſh cenſure on Dr Jortin, as on a perſon who *delighted* in recording the miſery of his fellow-creatures, might have been ſpared; for Dr Jortin propoſes, with candour, and great decency of language, an opinion which many good and learned men have entertained. " There is uſually," ſays he, " much raſhneſs and preſumption in " pronouncing, that the calamities of ſinners " are particular judgements of God; yet if, " from ſacred and profane, from ancient " and modern hiſtorians, a collection were " made

" made of all the cruel perſecuting tyrants " who delighted in tormenting their fellow- " creatures, and who died not the common " death of all men, nor were viſited after " the viſitation of all men, but whoſe plagues " were horrible and ſtrange, even a ſceptic " would be moved at the evidence, and " would be apt to ſuſpect that it was θεῖόν " τι, that the hand of God was in it." Such is his preamble; and what follows conſiſts of hiſtorical collections, of the import of which every reader is left to judge for himſelf.

The paſſage in Grotius to which Mr Gibbon refers is in theſe words: " Claros ſa- " pientiæ, et juris et carminum auctores, a- " lioſque, eodem morbo abſumptos, memo- " riæ proditum novimus." That is, " We " know from hiſtory, that celebrated wiſe " men, writers on law, and poets, and o- " thers alſo, have died of that diſtemper " which proved fatal to Philip II."

There

There is another paſſage in Grotius on a ſubject not diſſimilar, which Mr Gibbon, probably, overlooked. It is in his Annotations on the Acts of the Apoſtles, c. xii. v. 23. concerning the death of Herod. [Καὶ γενόμενος σκωληκόβρωτος.] "Ad exemplum Antiochi. Oſtendit ſic Deus iis qui plus homine ſpirant, homines eos eſſe, id eſt, vermium eſcam." That is, "His death was like that of Antiochus. Thus does God ſhew to thoſe who exalt themſelves above the condition of man, that they are men, food for worms."

Chap. XXXIV.

Having had occaſion in a former work to offer ſome obſervations on the edict of Galerius, I judge it improper to tranſcribe them here; and therefore beg leave to refer the reader to *Remains of Chriſtian Antiquity*, v. iii. p. 128.—135.

Chap. XXXVII.

P. 90. l. 13. "Hence famine, from neglect

" glect of cultivation." The MS. has, " Hinc " fames agris ferentibus." As this expreſ-ſion is ſingular, Baluze reads, " *Non* feren-" tibus." The emendation propoſed by Gale is ingenious, but more violent ſtill: " A-" gricolis non ferentibus."

P. 91. l. 9. " Merciful robbers." " La-" trones quidem hoc proverbio uti ſolent, " ut *quibus non auferunt vitam, dediſſe* ſe " dicant." *Salvianus*, d. Gubernatione Dei, l. viii. *in fin.*

Chap. XL.

P. 98. l. 2. " Military commanders," &c. The MS. has, " Promoti militari modo in-" ſtruct*ibile mens es*ſagitari proſequuntur." No ſenſe can be drawn from the letters print-ed in *Italics*; the reſt is intelligible enough, if we ſuppoſe " ſagitari" to be written for " ſagittarii." What remains to be account-ed for is " *bilemenſes*;" and here, indeed, there is full ſcope for conjecture, and va-rious emendations have been propoſed. Thus,

" *Velites*

" *Velites* et ſagittarii," BALUZIUS. This is adopted in the Tranſlation as a plauſible reading.—" Et *Viennenſes* ſagittarii," VOSSIUS.—" *Telis et ſagittis* proſequuntur," GRÆVIUS.—" Collinientes ſagittas," GALE.—" *Præcedunt* militari modo inſtructi, *equites* " et ſagittarii proſequuntur," ABBAS A S. HILARIO.—" Inſtructi *pilo et enſe*," BAULDRI. This, by the way, agrees not with the Latin idiom, which would require *pilis et enſibus*, though " armés de lance et d'e-" pée" may be good French.—" *Ut velites* " et ſagittarii," or " *ut milites* et ſagittarii," CUPERUS.—" *Vigiles* et ſagittarii," COLUMBUS.

Chap. XLIII.

P. 101. l. 15. " As if to revenge the death " of his father." [*Quaſi* necem patris ſui vindicaturus.] An expreſſion preciſely ſimilar occurs in Zoſimus, ii. [προσποιησάμενος ἐπὶ τῷ θανάτῳ τῦ πάλῃος ὀδυνᾶσθαι.] " Af-" fecting

" fecting to be grieved on account of the " death of his father."

Chap. XLIV.

P. 102. l. 8. " Becauſe the ſoothſayers " had foretold," &c. To the ſame purpoſe a Panegyriſt ſpeaks. " Stultum et nequam " animal nuſquam extra parietes egredi au- " debat. Ita enim aut *prodigiis* aut metûs " ſui præſagiis monebatur." *Incert. Paneg. Conſtant. Aug.* § 14.

P. 102. l. 16. " The troops of Maxen- " tius prevailed." [Maxentiani milites præ- valebant.] This is ſingular; it is not re- corded by any other hiſtorian extant, not even by Zoſimus. There is a paſſage in Photius, *Biblioth.* p. 1408. quoted from *Po- litia SS. Patrum*, which alludes to the cir- cumſtance recorded by Lactantius. συμπλα- κεὶς μάχῃ, τὰ πρῶτα μὲν ἐγγὺς γίνεσθαι τοῦ λα- βεῖν τὸ ἧττον. " Having been engaged in " battle, he was, at firſt, well nigh being " worſted." Thus the check which Con-

ſtantine received is ſpoken of by Chriſtian hiſtorians, but never by the Heathen: No ſmall evidence of candour on the one part, and of careleſſneſs on the other.

P. 103. l. 4. "The *fifth* year of his reign "was drawing to an end." [Quinquennalia terminabantur.] Here there is a difficulty. The anonymous Panegyriſt ſays, "Sed "divina mens et ipſius urbis æterna Maje- "ſtas nefario homini eripuere conſilium. "Ut ex inveterato illo torpore ac fœdiſſi- "mis latebris ſubitò prorumperet, et con- "ſumpto per deſidias ſenio, [l. ſexennio], "ipſum diem natalis ſui ultimâ cæde ſigna- "ret, ne *ſeptennarium illum numerum ſacrum* "*et religioſum* inchoando violaret." *Incert. Paneg. Conſtant. Aug.* § 16. If, as ſome ſuppoſe, the *quinquennalia*, which began to be celebrated at the end of the *fifth* year, or at the beginning of the *ſixth*, were continued occaſionally throughout the *ſixth* year, the difficulty will be removed; and if the *quin-*

quennalia

quennalia and the *vicennalia* were of the nature of a *jubilee*, this hypotheſis of the continuation of the feſtival is not unlikely. The ſubject, however, merits not a minute inquiry; for, were it examined and cleared to the bottom, it would only ſerve to aſcertain the moment of the acceſſion of Maxentius to the ſovereignty of Rome.

P. 103. l. 7. "*The heavenly ſign.*" [Cœleſte ſignum Dei.] If, by this circumlocution, nothing is meant but "the mark or "figure of a croſs," and if it ſingly relates to the dream of Conſtantine, we muſt admit, that the ſtory of the luminous appearance in the heavens has no aid from the earlieſt contemporary hiſtorian. But, ſince "cœleſte "ſignum Dei" may be conſidered as a very ſingular circumlocution in that age for "the "mark" or "figure of a croſs," we might, perhaps, ſuppoſe, that it meant "the luminous appearance in the heavens," ſo fully deſcribed by Euſebius and other writers, and

that Lactantius, alluding to a thing, which, if it existed at all, must have been seen by thousands, called it the *cœleste signum Dei*; and mentioned the dream of Constantine as the sequel of that heavenly appearance.

P. 103. l. 18. " And firmly maintained " their ground." [Neque his fuga nota, neque illis.] From Virgil, *Æneid.* x. 757. A Panegyrist, speaking of the prætorian bands, says, " Latrocinii primi auctores—desperatâ " veniâ, locum quem pugnæ sumpserunt, texêre corporibus." *Incert. Paneg. Constant. Aug.* § 17. This description, for elegance and strength of language, is not unworthy even of the Augustan age.

P. 103. l. 19. " A sedition arose at Rome," &c. The passage is thus paraphrased by Mr Gibbon, i. 509. " Shame at length supplied " the place of courage, and forced him to " take the field. He was unable to sustain " the contempt of the Roman people; the " circus resounded with their indignant " clamours,

" clamours, *and they tumultuouſly beſieged* " *the gates of the palace*, reproaching the " puſillanimity of their indolent ſovereign, " and celebrating the heroic ſpirit of Con- " ſtantine." That " the Roman people tu- " multuouſly *beſieged the gates* of the pa- " lace," is a circumſtance not mentioned by Lactantius, and it does not appear from what author Mr Gibbon learnt it. The anonymous Panegyriſt ſays, that " Maxen- " tius, diſturbed by fearful omens, *removed* " *from the palace two days before the battle*, " and betook himſelf to a private habitation " in Rome."

P. 104. l. 3. " Conſtantine cannot be o- " vercome." [Conſtantinum vinci non poſ- ſe.] Heuman imagines the ſentence to be imperfect, and, for ſupplying it, adds " ſine " eo," as if the voice of the people had been, " that Conſtantine could not be van- " quiſhed unleſs by Maxentius in perſon." And in ſupport of this conjecture, it has been

urged

urged by a very able critic, " that in no " other way can we account for this change " of conduct in Maxentius, who, after ha- " ving resolved to remain in the city, now " issued forth, and placed himself at the " head of his army."

But how could Maxentius have been alarmed at an omen so favourable as the voice of the Roman people, proclaiming that *his* presence was necessary to vanquish Constantine, and saying in effect, " in te uno stat " salus reipublicæ?" On the contrary, when the people cried, that " Constantine was in- " vincible," it was not only an unfavourable omen, but a token also of disaffection and revolt; and accordingly the historian adds, that Maxentius was dismayed at it, [qua voce consternatus,] and again had recourse to divination. The uncertainty and hesitation of a superstitious mind may be discerned in every circumstance of his behaviour.

P. 104.

P. 104. l. 11. "The bridge in his rear was "broken down." Not the *pons Milvius*, but a temporary bridge of boats which had been conſtructed for facilitating the paſſage of the army. *Victor.* Epitome, p. 221. *Politia Patrum*, ap. Photium, p. 1408.

P. 105. l. 5. "*Maximus.*" It is probable, that the ſenate then decreed the title to Conſtantine, which appears at this day on the triumphal arch erected in honour of him.

IMP. CÆS. FL. CONSTANTINO. MAXIMO.
P. F. AUGUSTO. S. P. Q. R.
QUOD. INSTINCTUS. DIVINITATIS. MENTIS. MAGNITUDINE. CUM. EXERCITU. SUO. TAM. DE. TYRANNO. QUAM. DE. OMNI. EJUS. FACTIONE. UNO. TEMPORE. JUSTIS. REMPUBLICAM. ULTUS. EST. ARMIS. ARCUM. TRIUMPHIS. INSIGNEM. DICAVIT.

Chap. XLVI.

P. 108. l. 10. "An angel." Lactantius relates this ſtory, as if Licinius had been favoured with a heavenly viſion, and had actually

tually received the form of prayer from an angel. It will be remarked, however, that the ſtory reſts altogether on the evidence of Licinius himſelf, who, notwithſtanding any outward profeſſions, was neither a Chriſtian, nor the friend of Chriſtianity, and was, beſides, a worthleſs and profligate man.

P. 108. l. 20. "One of his ſecretaries." Probably becauſe he himſelf could not write. Victor, *Epitome*, p. 224. ſays Licinius was "infeſtus literis; quas, *per inſcitiam immo-* "*dicam*, virus ac peſtem publicam nomina- "bat, præcipuè forenſem induſtriam." Wicked tyrants have generally honoured the law and its profeſſors with marks of contempt and abhorrence.

P. 108. l. 20. "Dictated theſe words." Dr Jortin ſays, *Remarks on Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory*, iii. 6. "Licinius, if we may believe "the writer *d. M. P.* was inſtructed by an "angel how to obtain the victory over Ma- "ximinus. This ſeems to have been a mi-

"litary

" litary ſtratagem of Licinius, to *regain* the " favour of the Chriſtians, and to animate " his ſoldiers."

We have no reaſon to ſuppoſe that any divine communications would have been beſtowed on Licinius, and we have much reaſon to doubt of the heavenly original of this prayer. It is replete with tautology, and it more reſembles the acclamations of a Roman ſenate in the decline of the empire, than a form of prayer communicated by an angel. Beſides, the prayer is not Chriſtian;—it is conceived in ambiguous words; ſo that Pagans and profeſſors of Chriſtianity might have joined in it. The expreſſion, " ſalutem " noſtram tibi commendamus," pronounced by a Pagan, would mean, " to thee we " recommend our ſafety," but by a Chriſtian, " to thee we commit our ſalvation." It was impoſſible to preſerve this ambiguity in an Engliſh verſion. That Licinius, as Dr Jortin ſays, uſed a ſtratagem to animate his

ſoldiers, is probable; but there is no evidence that he uſed it to *regain* the favour of his Chriſtian ſoldiers: for we know not *what* Chriſtians Licinius had in his army, or what need he had of *regaining* their favour. Beſides, on this hypotheſis, a prayer in Chriſtian ſtyle, while it pleaſed one part of his army, would have diſguſted the other.

P. 110. l. 14. "The hoſt, doomed to "ſpeedy deſtruction," &c. [Audit acies peritura precantium murmur.] The tranſlation, notwithſtanding the aid from Milton, falls far ſhort of the elegance and energy of the original. The mixture of anapæſts muſt pleaſe every one who can judge of the propriety of cadence; and the words themſelves are ſo forcible and deſcriptive, that few ſcholars of ſtrong feelings will be able to read them without an emotion of horror.

Chap. XLVIII.

P. 115. l. 2. "The Supreme Divinity." They ſeem to profeſs a kind of Pagan Deiſm, ſuch

ſuch as Conſtantius held, that is, the belief of *one ſupreme God*, with many inferior divinities under him.

Chap. XLIX.

P. 119. l. 11. " As thoſe are wont who " believe that they eat and drink for the laſt " time." This paſſage is beautifully illuſtrated by Lactantius himſelf, *Inſt.* vii. c. *ult.* " Quantò quiſque annis in ſenectutem ver- " gentibus, appropinquare cernit illum diem, " quo ſit ei ex hac vita demigrandum, cogi- " tet quàm purus abſcedat, quàm innocens " ad judicium veniat; non ut faciunt qui- " dam cœcis mentibus nixi, qui, jam defi- " cientibus corporis viribus, in hoc admo- " nentur ultimæ neceſſitatis, ut cupidius et " ardentius hauriendis libidinibus intendant."

Mr Gibbon obſerves, that Zoſimus mentions the death of Maximin Daia as an ordinary event; but that Lactantius expatiates on it, and aſcribes it to the miraculous interpoſition of Heaven.—Zoſimus was a Hea-

then, and Lactantius was a Christian; and this might account for the silence of the one, as well as for the detail which the other gives, of the circumstances attending the death of Daia. It is possible, however, that Zosimus knew nothing of those circumstances; for the historian, who says, that Maximian Herculius died a natural death at Tarsus, might well be supposed ignorant of the manner in which Maximin Daia died; and nothing can be learnt from the testimony of one who could not distinguish an Emperor of the West from an Emperor of the East, because there was something similar in the sound of their names.

Other Christian writers relate the catastrophe of Daia nearly as Lactantius does. See *Eusеb. Hist. Eccles.* ix. 10. and *Chrysostom. d. Sancto Babyla.* Neither is there any Heathen writer that contradicts their relation. And, indeed, if the joint testimony of Lactantius and Eusebius, the only two historians who lived

lived in that age, be not sufficient to establish the truth of facts so public as the disease and death of the Emperor of the East, what is there that remains, unless to set aside the testimony of all Christians, as *sacri et intestabiles*, to abandon ourselves to scepticism, and to declare, at once, that we know not what to believe!

P. 120. l. 14. "Christ to have mercy upon him." We learn from Eusebius, *H. E.* ix. 10. that Daia, before his last illness, ceased from persecuting the Christians, and even issued an edict very favourable for them. When to those circumstances we add, his earnest, though late, applications to the mercies of Christ, may we not hope that his repentance was sincere?

Victor, *Epitome*, p. 222. attempts to place the character of Daia in a less odious light than our writers have done. "Ortu qui-
"dem atque instituto pastorali, verùm *sa-*
"*pientissimi cujusque ac litteratorum cultor*,
"ingenio

" ingenio quieto, vini avidior, quo ebrius,
" quædam corruptâ mente aſpera jubebat:
" qui, cùm pigeret factum, differri quæ præ-
" cepiſſet, in tempus ſobrium ac matutinum
" ſtatuit." Here Victor ſeems to admit, that the manners of Daia were rude, ſuitable to his birth and education, that he was a confirmed drunkard, and was wont in his drunkenneſs to iſſue cruel orders; but the hiſtorian adds, that, ſenſible of his outrageous diſpoſition at thoſe ſeaſons, which conſtantly recurred, he enjoined his miniſters to delay executing his commands until the more ſober hours of the morning. And to the ſame purpoſe Euſebius ſpeaks, *H. E.* viii. 14.

With reſpect to the *ingenium quietum*, it is probable, that the phraſe implies his ſluggiſhneſs and inactivity; and the undiſtinguiſhing veneration that he ſhewed to *every* wiſe and learned man, may relate to his appointment of ſo many additional prieſts, and ſuperintendants in religious matters throughout

out the different cities and provinces of his dominions: but, more probably, it relates to the exceeding favour that he ſhewed to ſoothſayers, and to all who profeſſed knowledge in magical arts. See *Euſeb.* H. E. viii. 14.

Mr Gibbon, i. 697. has elegantly paraphraſed the account which Euſebius gives of the manners of Maximin Daia. "The Emperor was devoted to the worſhip of the "gods, to the ſtudy of magic, and the belief of oracles. The *prophets* or philoſophers, whom he revered as the favourites "of Heaven, were frequently raiſed to the "government of provinces, and admitted "into his moſt ſecret councils. They eaſily "convinced him, that the Chriſtians had "been indebted for their *victories* to their "regular diſcipline, and that *the weakneſs "of Polytheiſm had principally flowed from a "want of union and ſubordination* among "the miniſters of religion. A ſyſtem of government was therefore inſtituted, which

"was

" was evidently copied from the policy of " the church."

Like moſt paraphraſts, Mr Gibbon is apt to loſe ſight of the original. For two or three lines he is no leſs exact than elegant; but at the word *prophet* he diſengages himſelf from a careful imitation of Euſebius. It is true, that Euſebius, *H. E.* ix. 10. applies the word *prophets* to the counſellors of Daia; but it is equally true that, *H. E.* viii. 14. he gives the juſt appellation of *cheats* to thoſe very *prophets*. The meaning of Euſebius cannot be miſunderſtood, when the genuine Greek ſenſe of the word προφήτης is attended to. Mr Gibbon well knows, that it ſignifies " an interpreter of oracles, a ſooth- " ſayer, an *haruſpex*," and that it has no relation to the Engliſh ſenſe of the word *prophet*; and therefore it muſt have been from inadvertency alone, that he expreſſed the *ſound* without the *ſenſe* of Euſebius.

It ſeems that thoſe *prophets* of Daia " ea- " ſily

" fily convinced him, that the victories of the " Chriſtians were to be aſcribed to regular " diſcipline, and that *the weakneſs of Poly-* " *theiſm flowed from a want of union and* " *ſubordination* in the miniſters of religion." If ſuch was the caſe, the *ingenium quietum* of Daia, his dull ſottiſh diſpoſition, muſt have led him to be eaſily convinced indeed! The aſſertions of his philoſophers were barefaced ſophiſms, enough to have diſguſted any man of moderate underſtanding. By *victories of the Chriſtians*, I preſume that they meant perſeverance in the faith under every diſcouragement, and amidſt the moſt exquiſite tortures; a perſeverance not connected with ſubordination in offices or the other externals of religion: and if the philoſophers aſſured Daia, that *the weakneſs of Polytheiſm flowed from a want of union and ſubordination in the miniſters of religion*, they ſpake againſt their own conviction, and from views of private emolument; for they well knew

 that

that Polytheiſm, a mere fable, originated in the ignorance of men, and grew up with their prejudices; that it had attempted to maintain itſelf by the *union* of worſhippers, how different ſoever in opinions and rites; and that *the ſubordination of offices*, the appointment of *Antiſtites* and *Principes Sacerdotum*, and even the authority of an imperial *Pontifex Maximus*, had been unable to ſupport a fabric not founded on conſcience and judgement.

Chap. L.

P. 121. l. 1. "Licinius." Lactantius candidly relates the many cruelties of Licinius. To have cenſured them would have been dangerous, and it is poſſible that he did not ſee their enormity in ſo clear a light, as he would have done had Licinius profeſſed himſelf a Pagan and a perſecutor; for the bias of the human mind to benefactors is very ſtrong. After Licinius became a perſecutor, Lactantius diſcovered him to have been a bad

bad man: for to him it is probable that the following paſſage alludes. " Quidam pro-
" bitate fictâ viam ſibi ad potentiam mu-
" niunt, faciuntque multa, quæ boni ſolent,
" eo quidem promptius, quòd fallendi gra-
" tiâ faciunt, utinamque tam facile eſſet
" præſtare, quàm facile eſt ſimulare bonita-
" tem! Sed ii cùm eſſe cœperint propoſiti
" ac voti ſui compotes, et *ſummum potentiæ*
" *gradum* ceperint, tum verò, ſimulatione
" depoſitâ, mores ſuos detegunt, rapiunt-
" que omnia, et violant, et vexant, *eoſque ip-*
" *ſos bonos, quorum cauſam ſuſceperant, in-*
"*ſequuntur.*" *Inſt.* vi. 6.

Chap. LII.

P. 123. l. 17. " I relate all thoſe things
" on the authority of well-informed per-
" ſons," &c. The MS. has, " Quæ omnia
" ſecundum *finem ſcienti enim* loquor, ita
" ut geſta ſunt mandanda literis credidi."
Lenglet du Freſnoy attempts to vindicate the reading in the MS. He obſerves, that " ſe-
" cundùm

" cundùm finem" means, " at a time when " the end of the world is approaching." But this interpretation is exceſſively ſtrained, and, to ſay the truth, is hardly conſiſtent either with ſenſe or the import of the words. Some read " ſecundùm *fidem*, *ſci-* " *enti enim* loquor," &c. At firſt ſight this emendation is ſpecious; but it may be objected, that the hiſtorian could not with propriety appeal to the perſonal knowledge of Donatus for the truth of the whole narrative, becauſe many of the events which it contains happened during his long impriſonment. " Secundùm *fidem ſcientium* loquor," appears to be the true reading; and we may reaſonably conjecture, that Lactantius related many of the circumſtances in his narrative on the authority of Conſtantine himſelf.

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